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van der Walde

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(54) **SUSPENDED SEGMENTED DISPLAY ARRAY**

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Related U.S. Application Data

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(51) **Int. Cl.**
G09F 15/00 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **G09F 15/0006** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC G09F 15/0006; G09F 15/0068
USPC 40/605, 606.11, 600, 757
See application file for complete search history.

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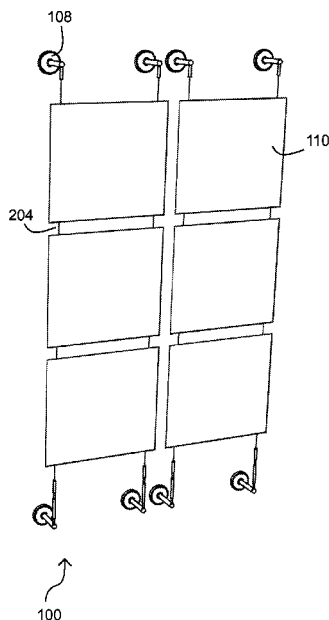
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Primary Examiner — Gary Hoge

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A suspended segmented display array in one embodiment includes multiple cables offset from a wall via standoff members. Adjacent display panels attach to cables via finger releasable clamps and present varied and unique visual displays. A versatile and cost-effective display system thus is established that accommodates a wide range of content which can readily be changed out.

11 Claims, 41 Drawing Sheets



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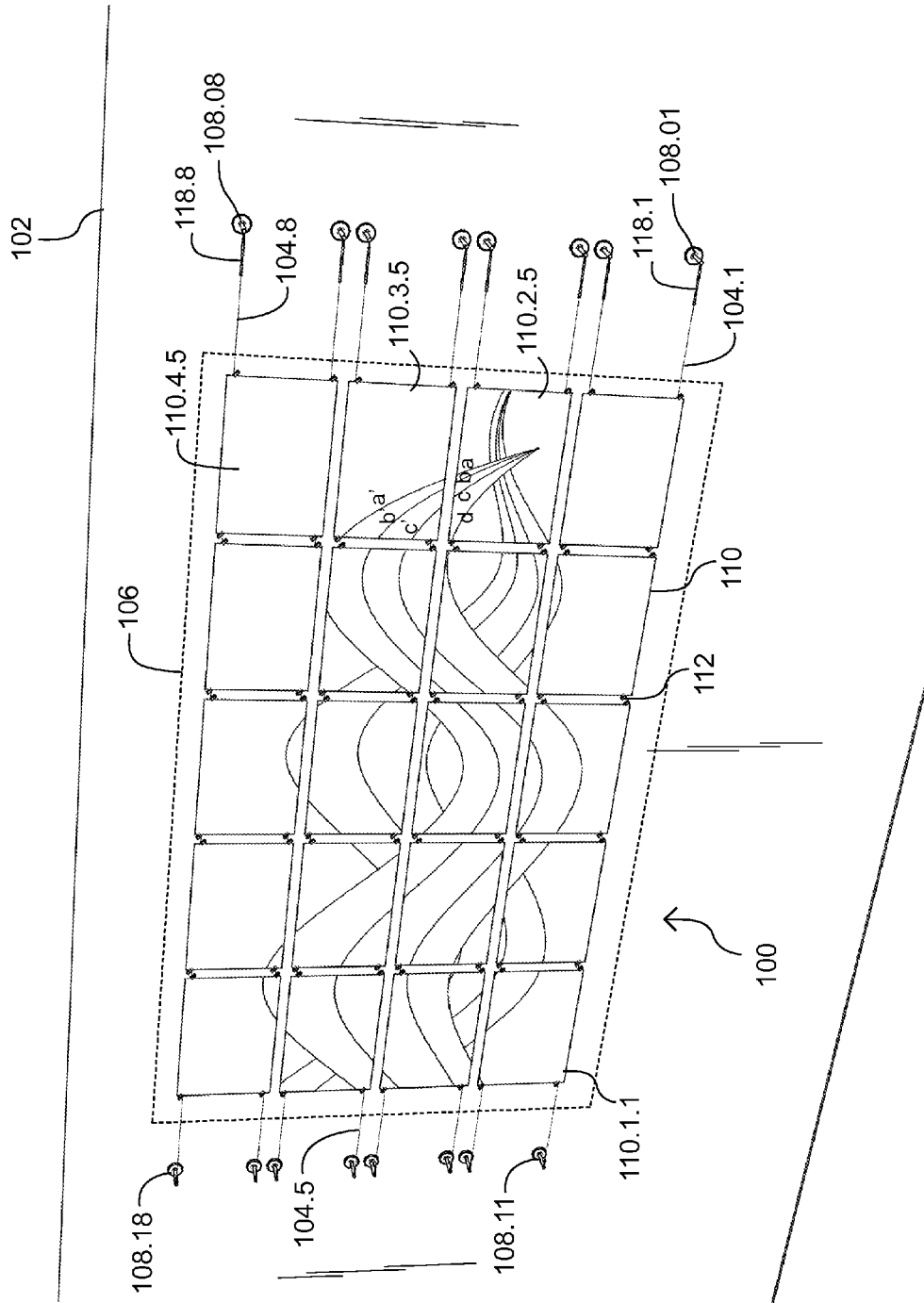


FIG. 1

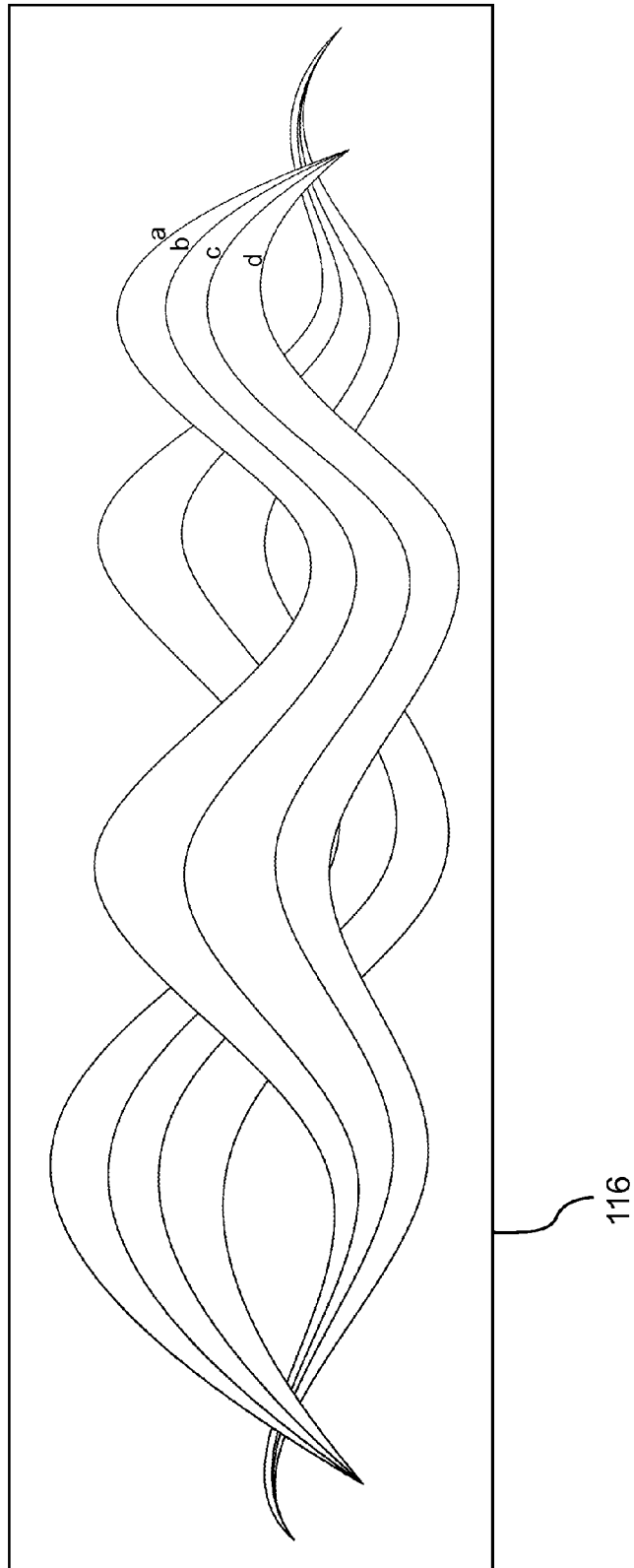


FIG. 2

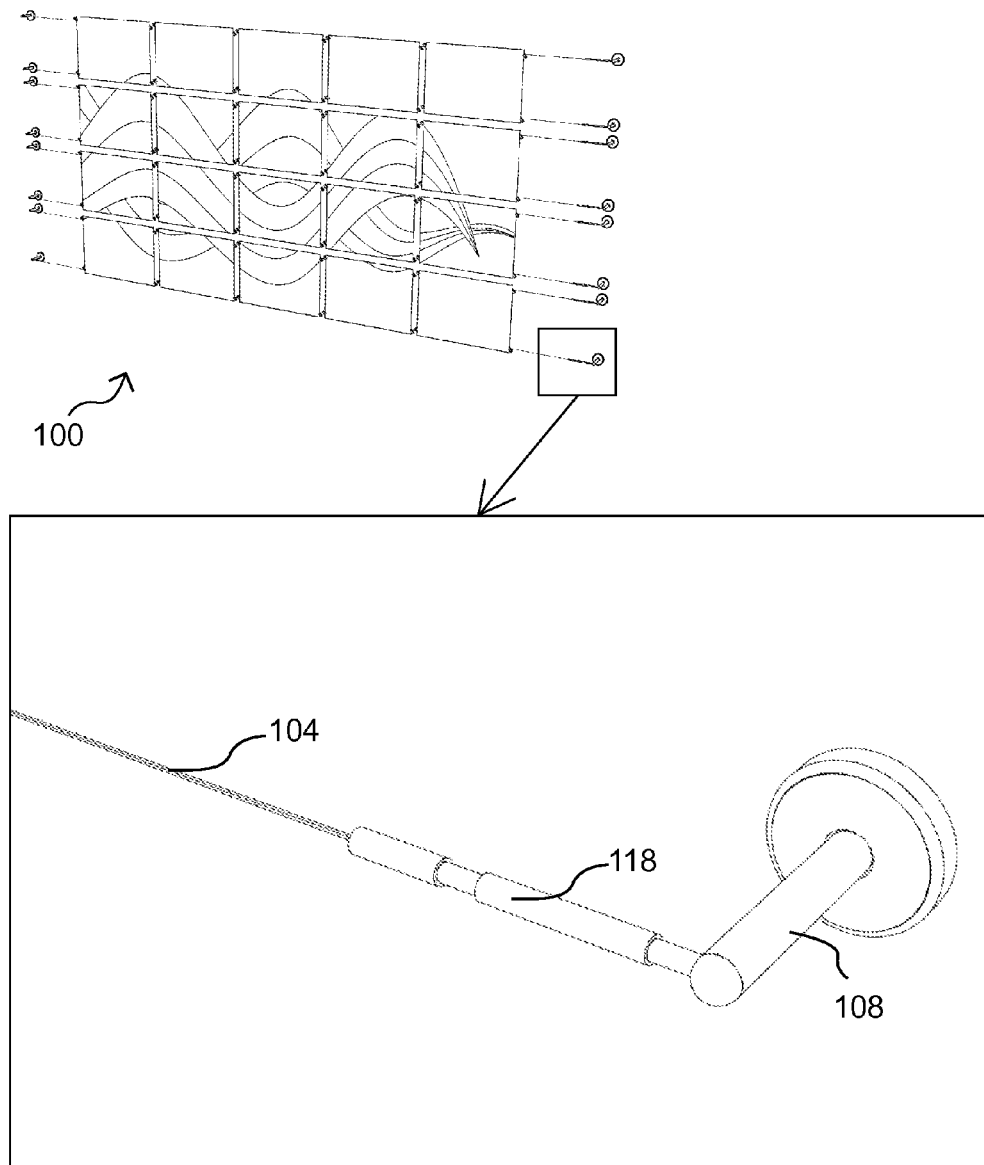


FIG. 3

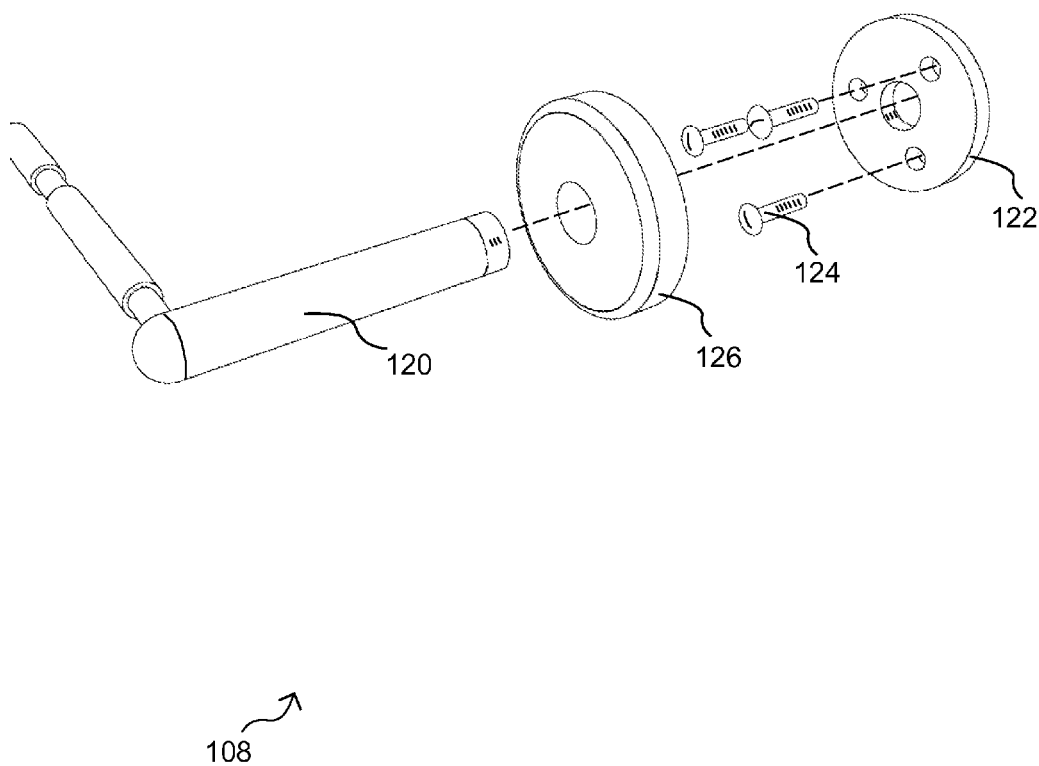


FIG. 4

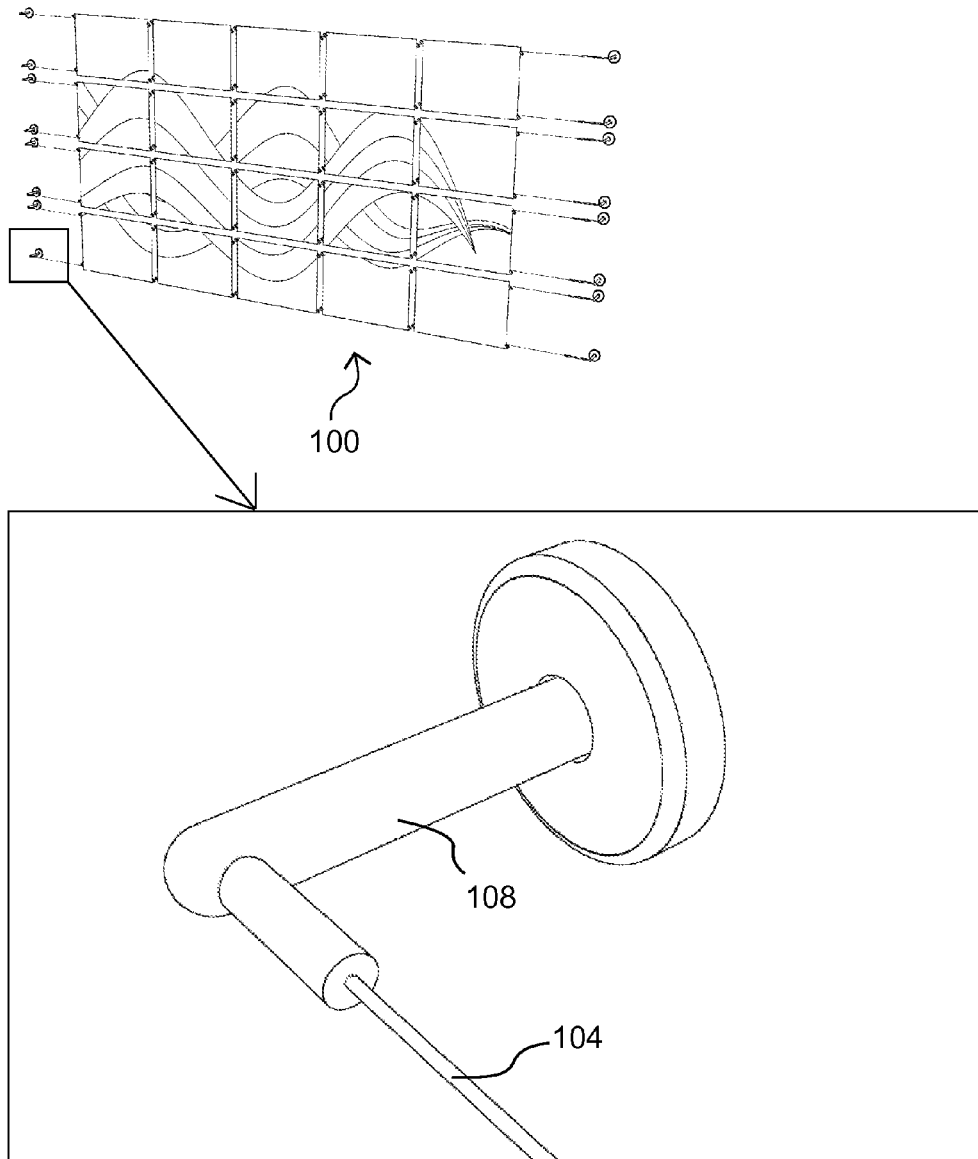


FIG. 5

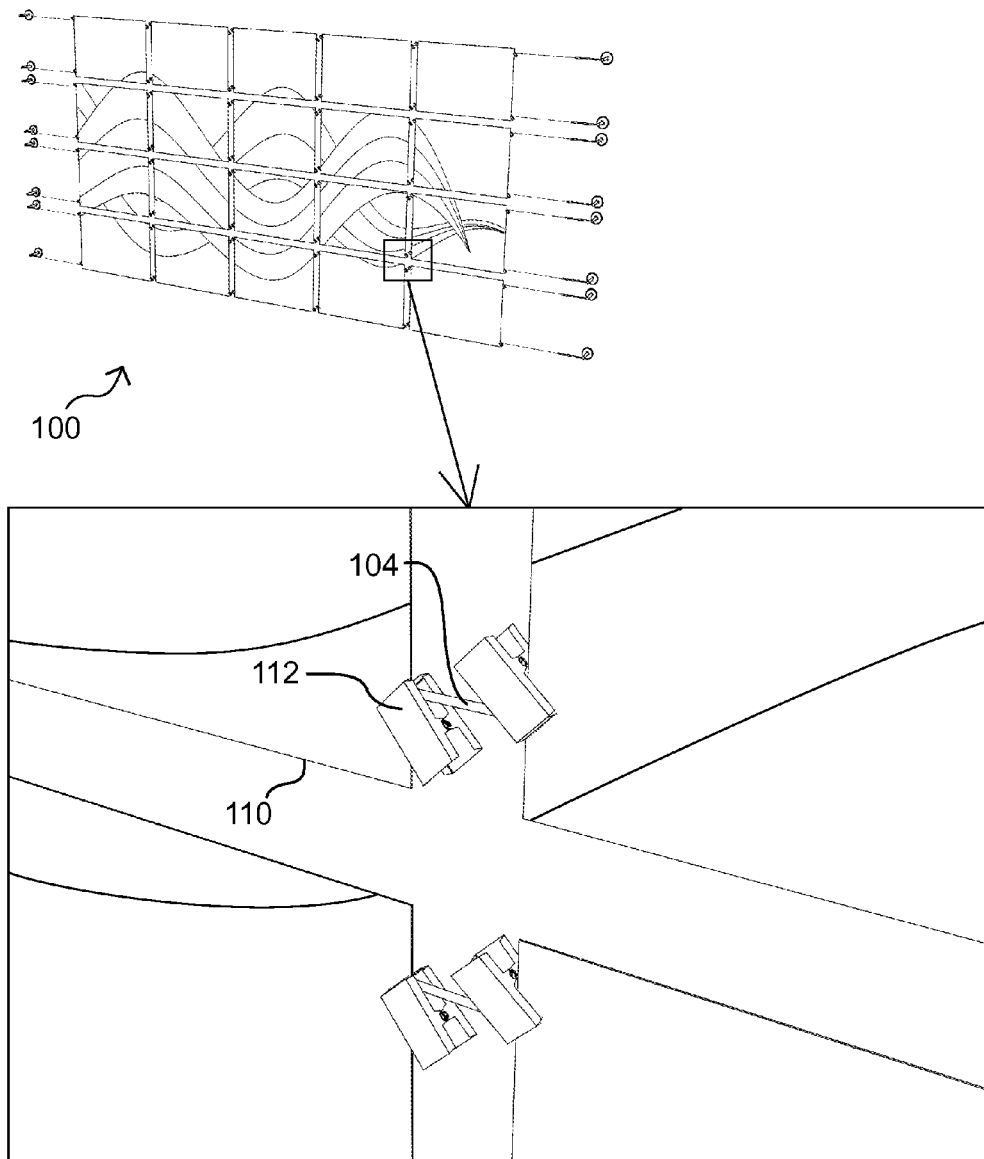


FIG. 6

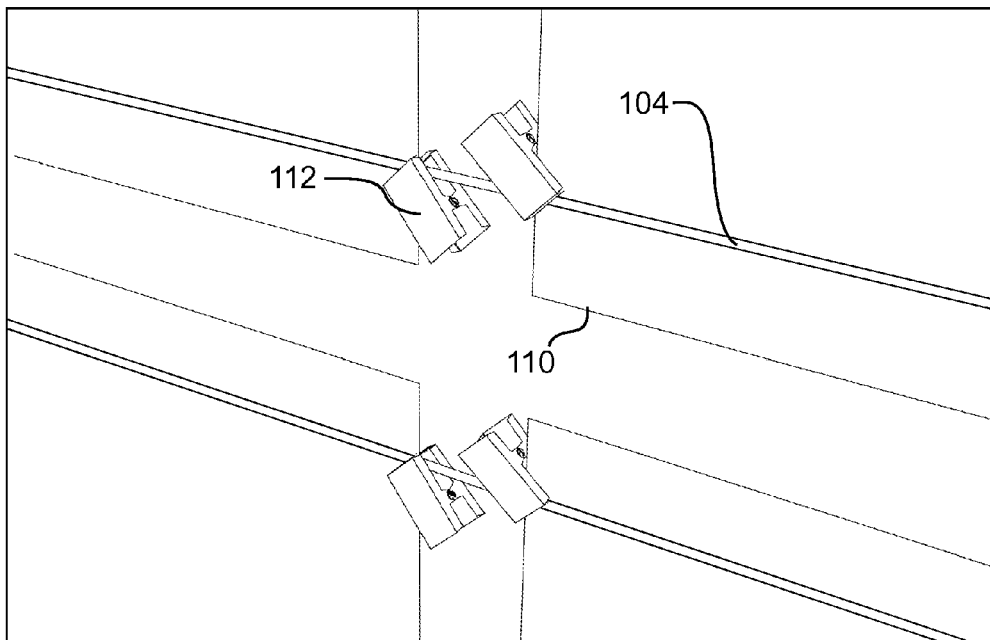


FIG. 7

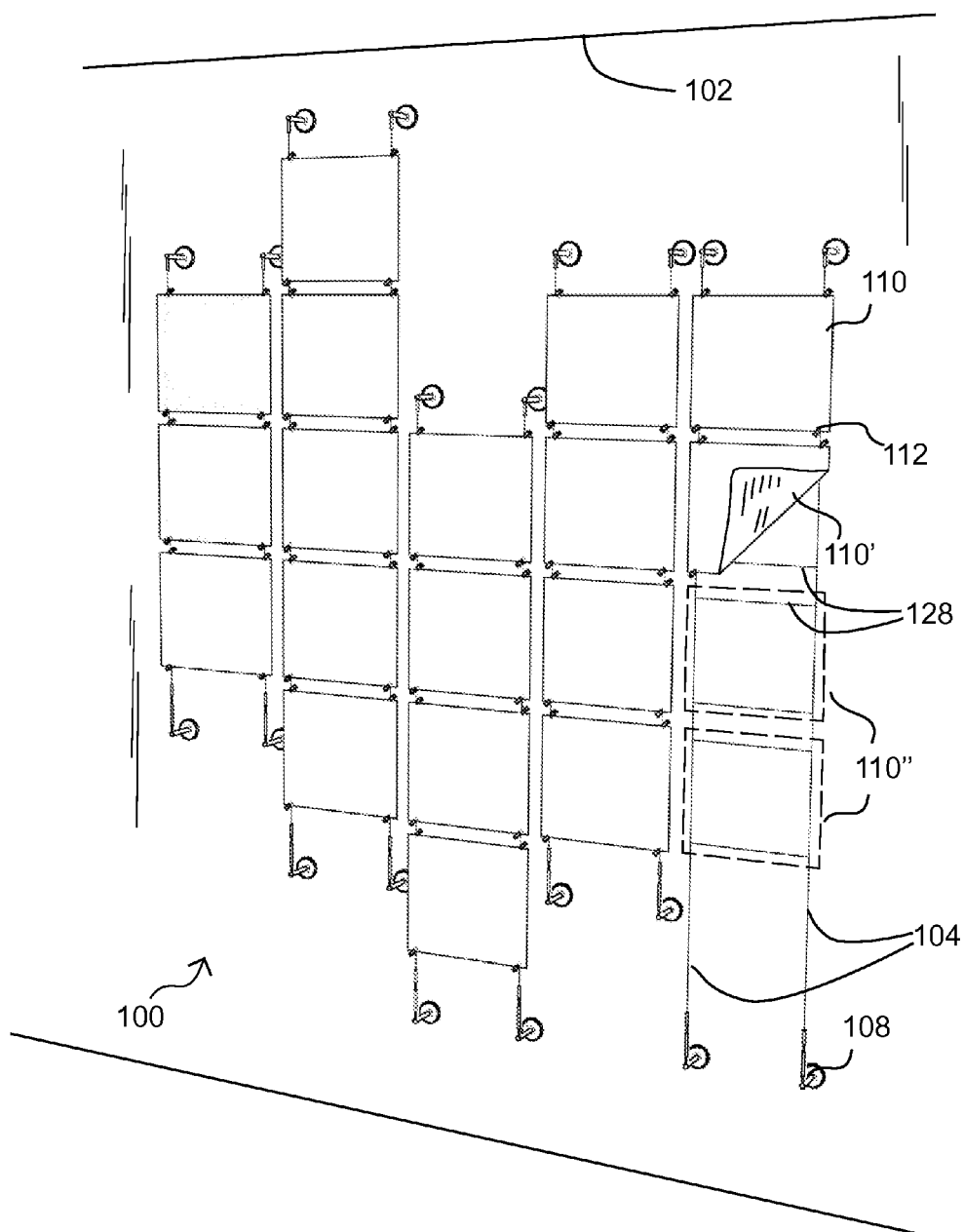


FIG. 8

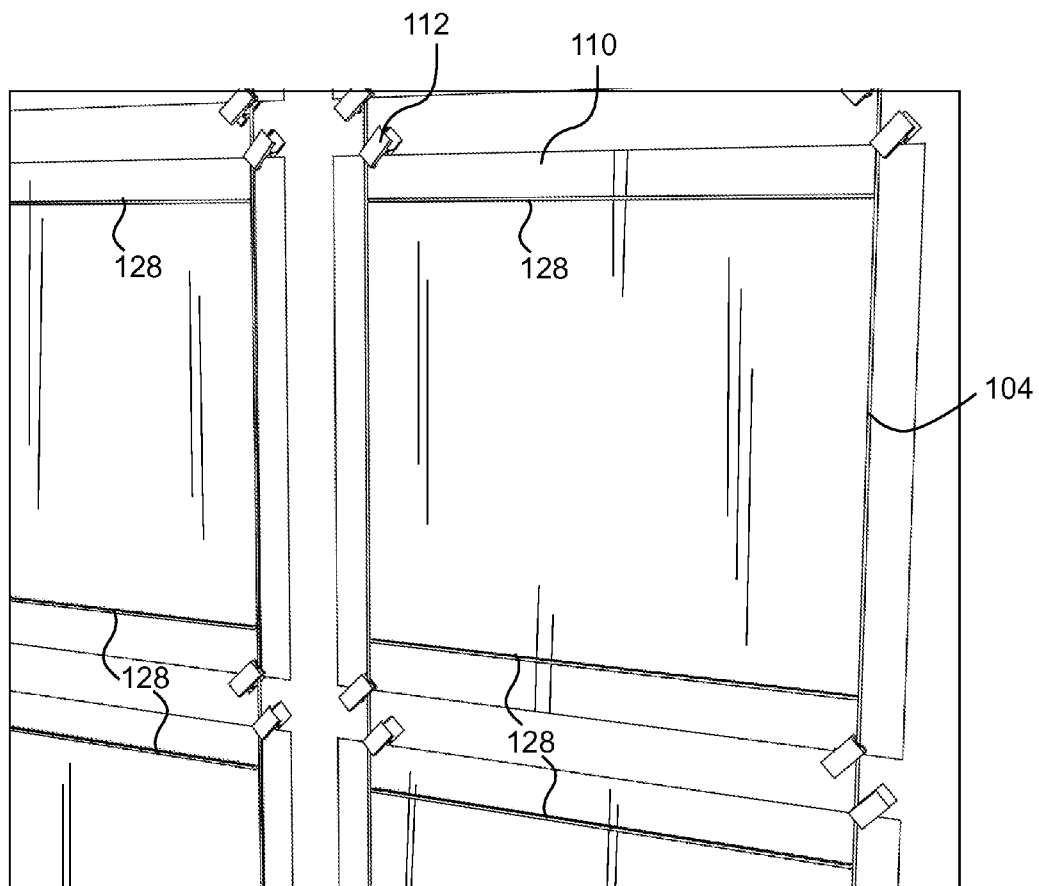


FIG. 9

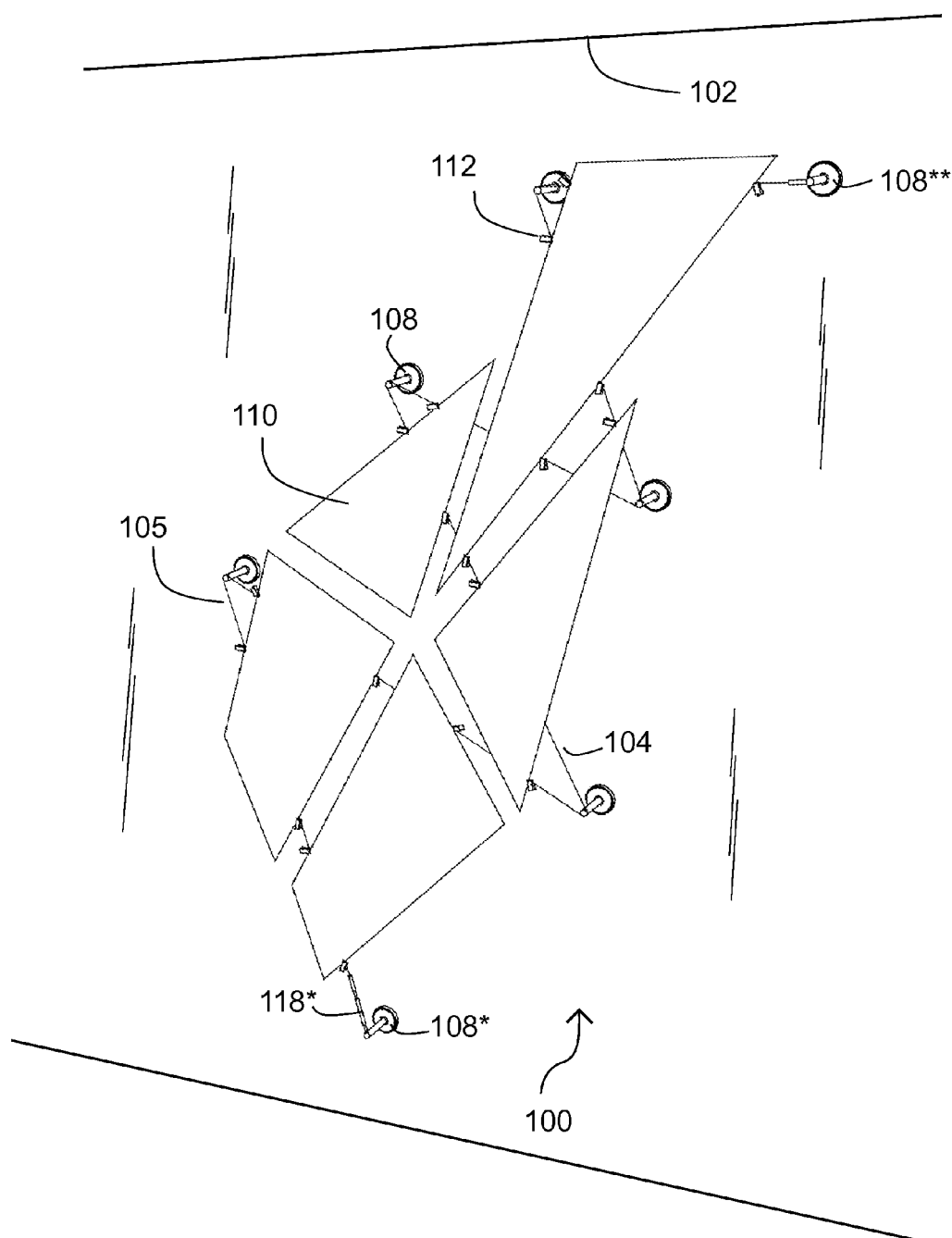


FIG. 10

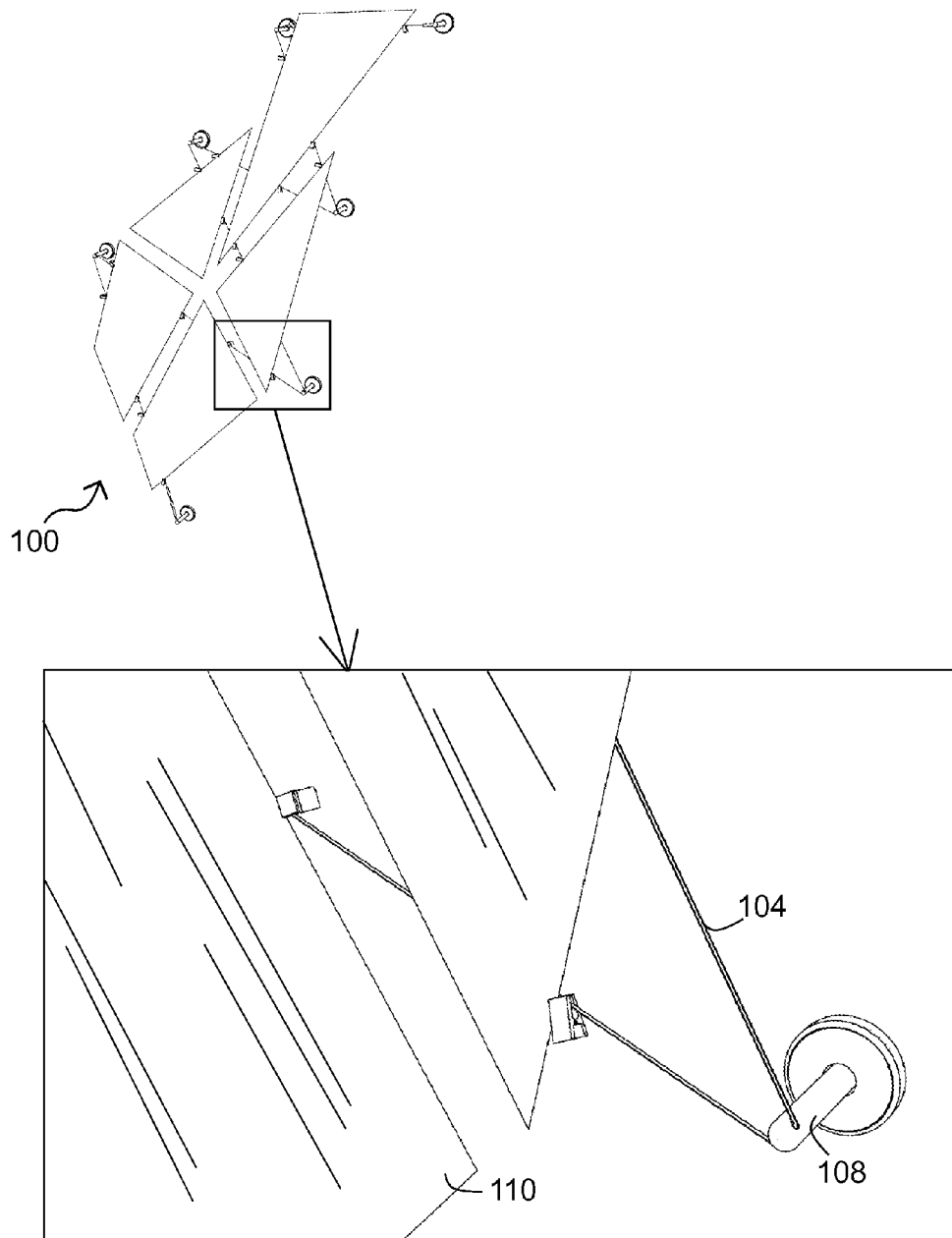
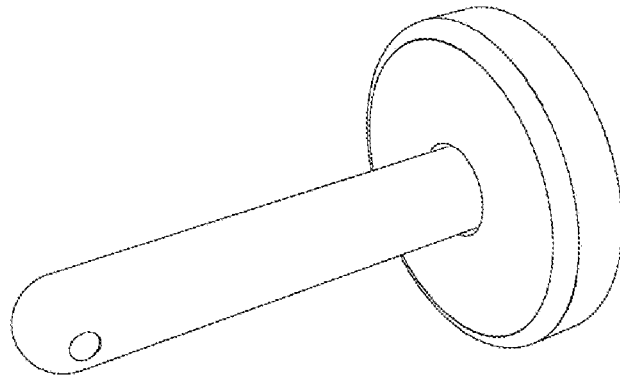


FIG. 11



108 ↗

FIG. 12

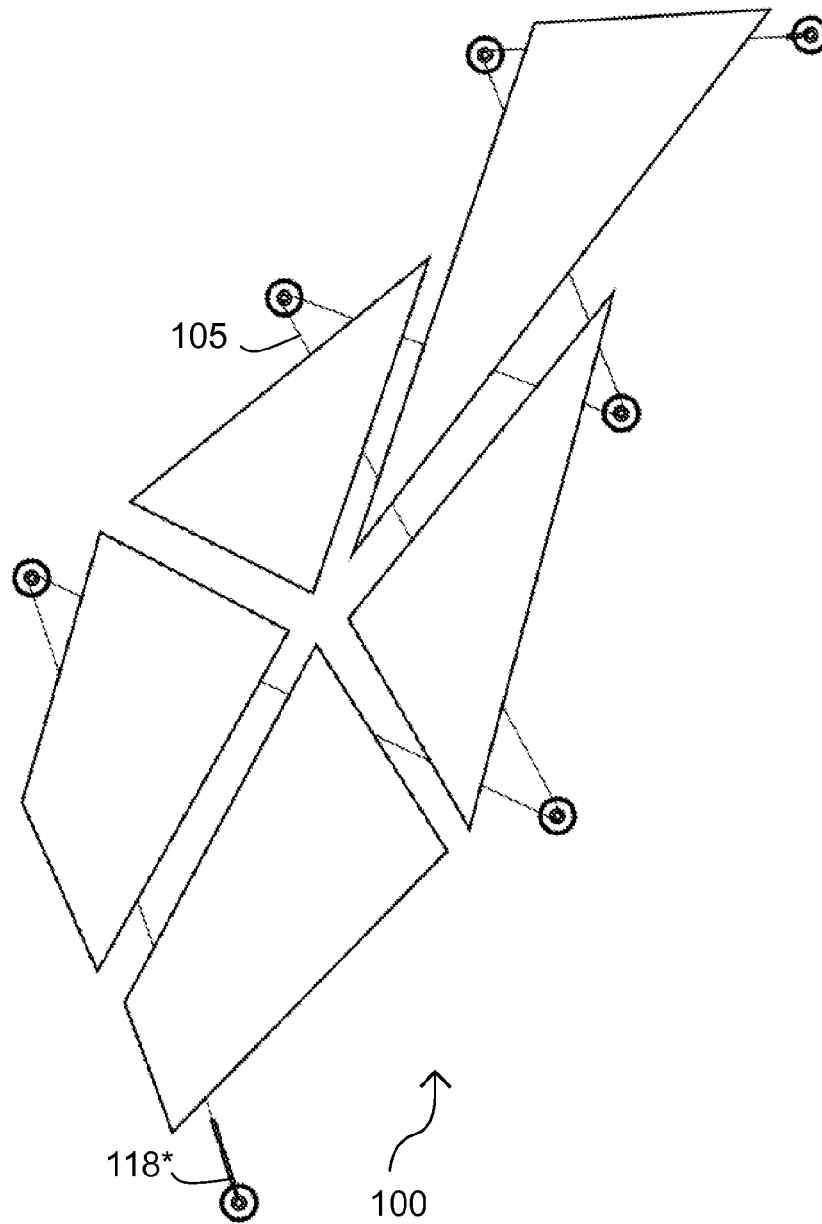


FIG. 13

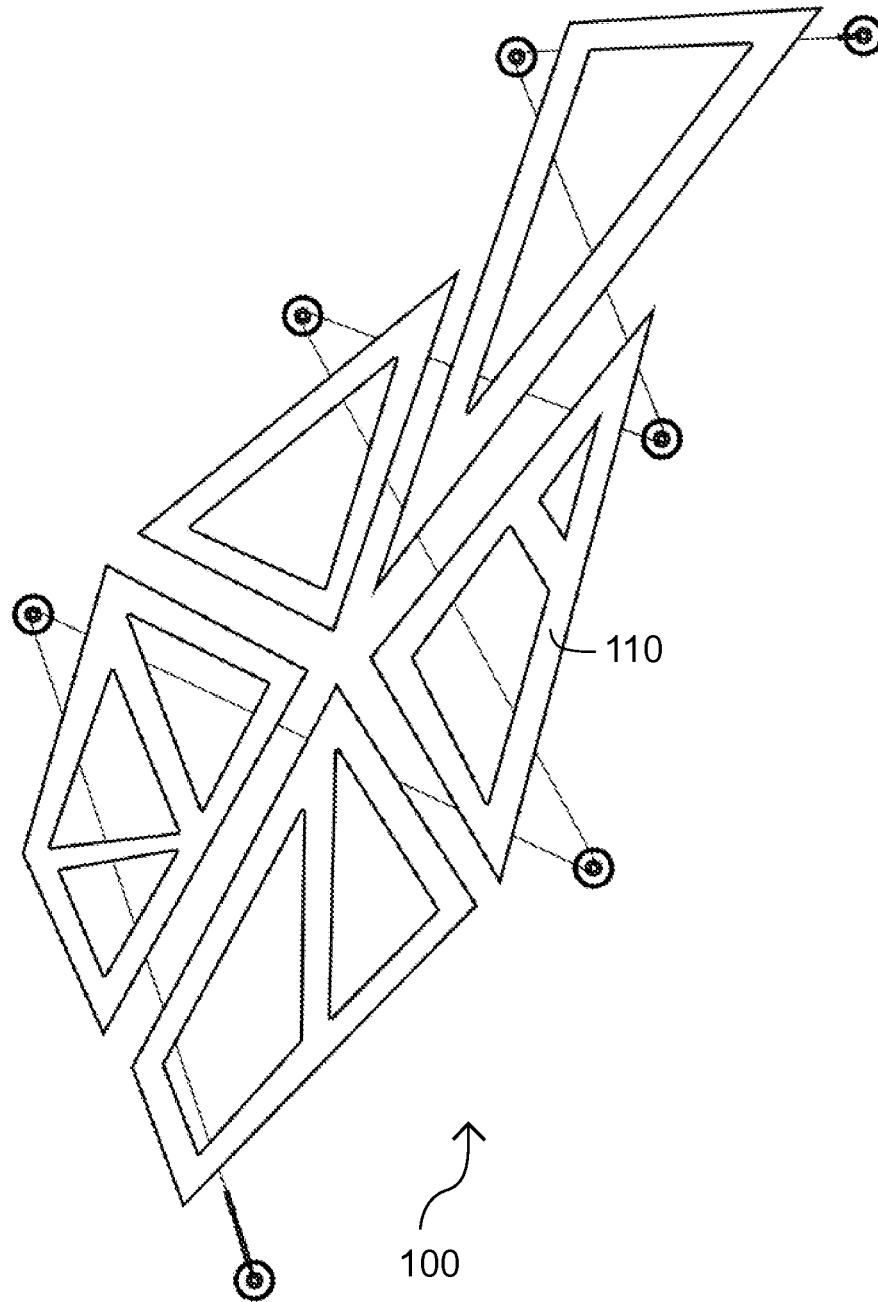


FIG. 14

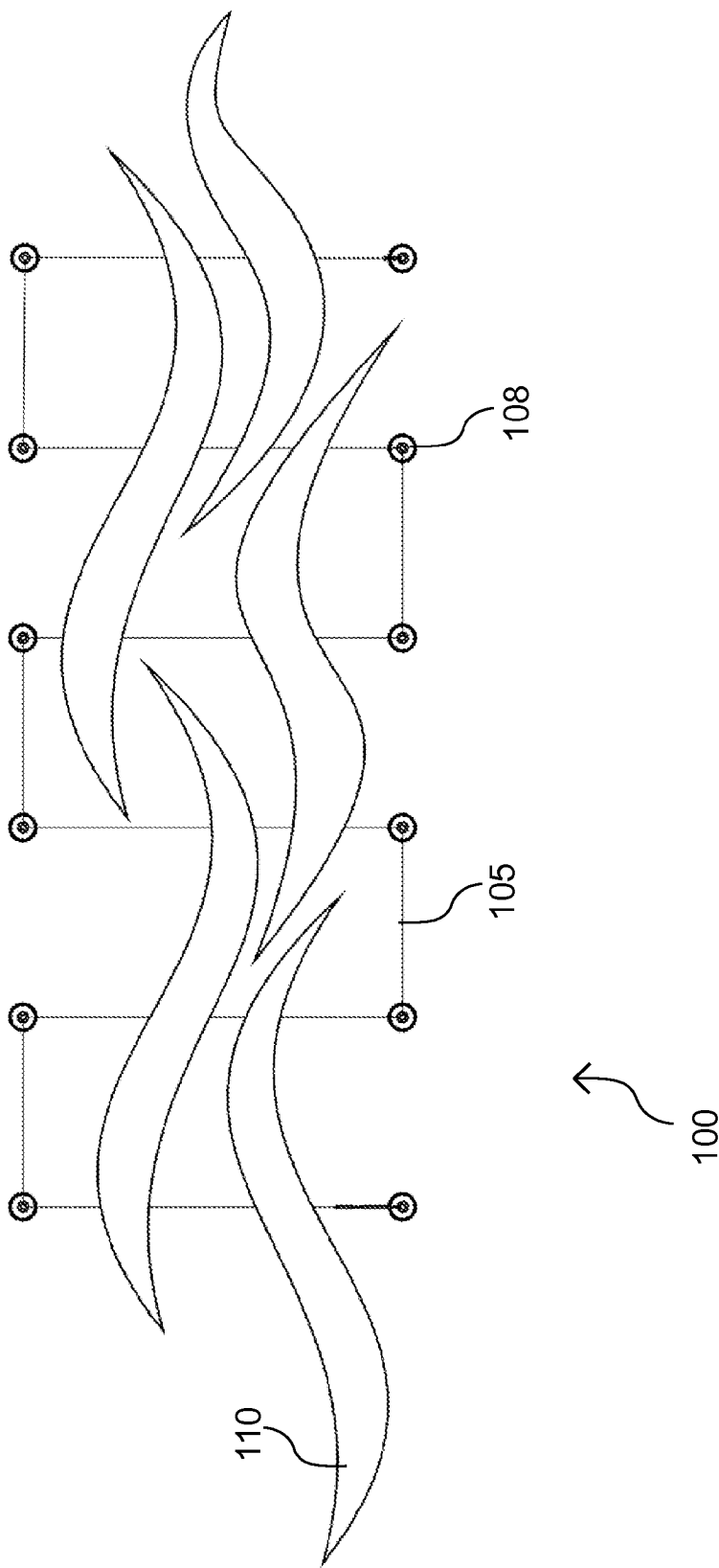


FIG. 15

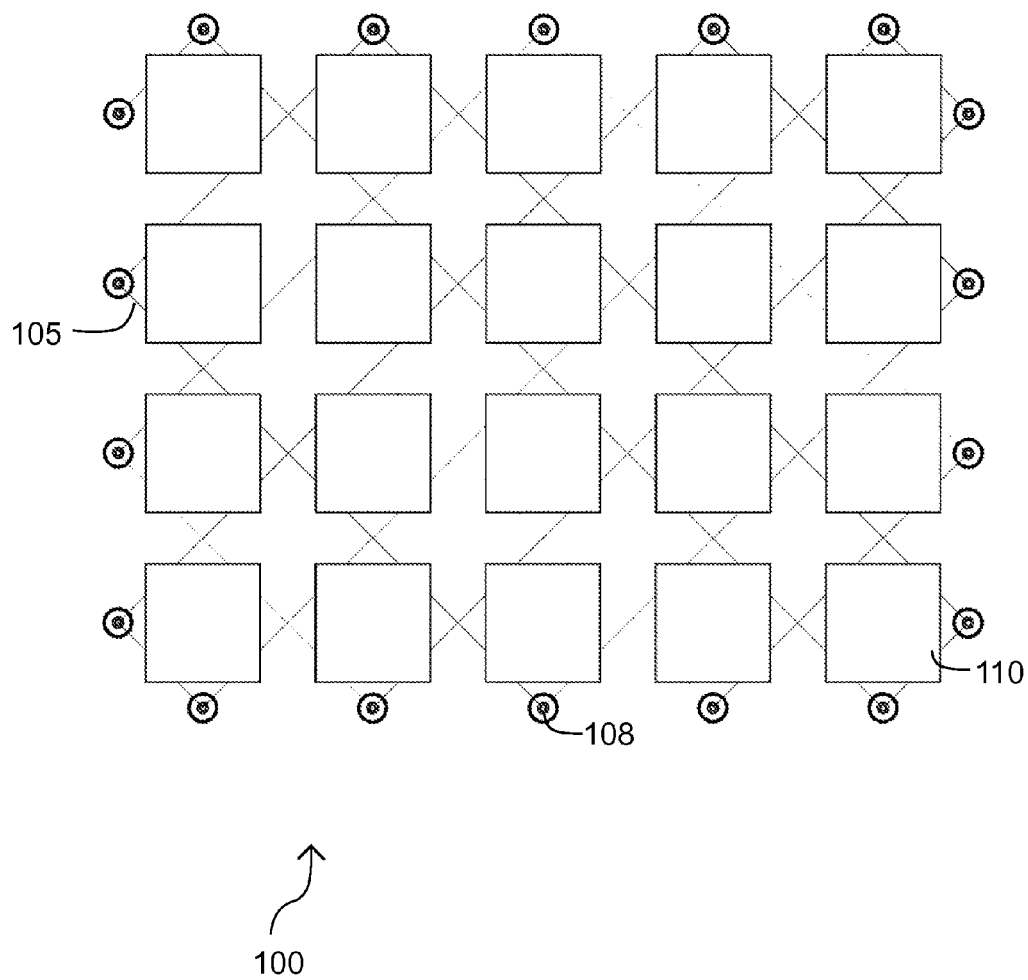


FIG. 16

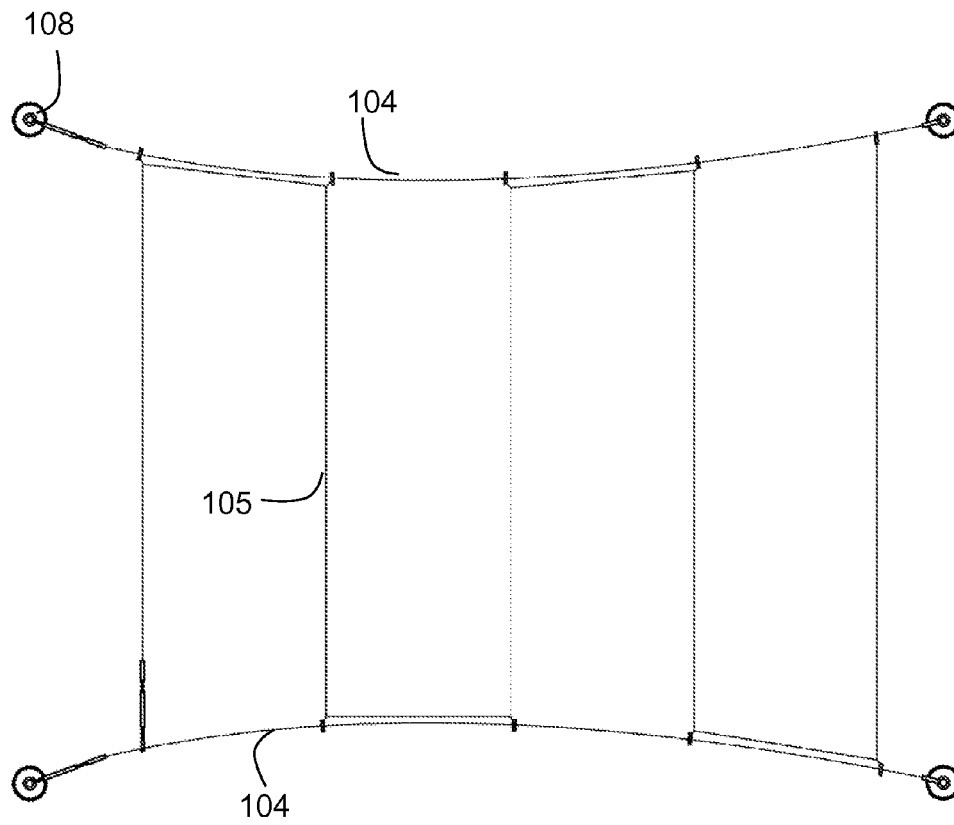


FIG. 17

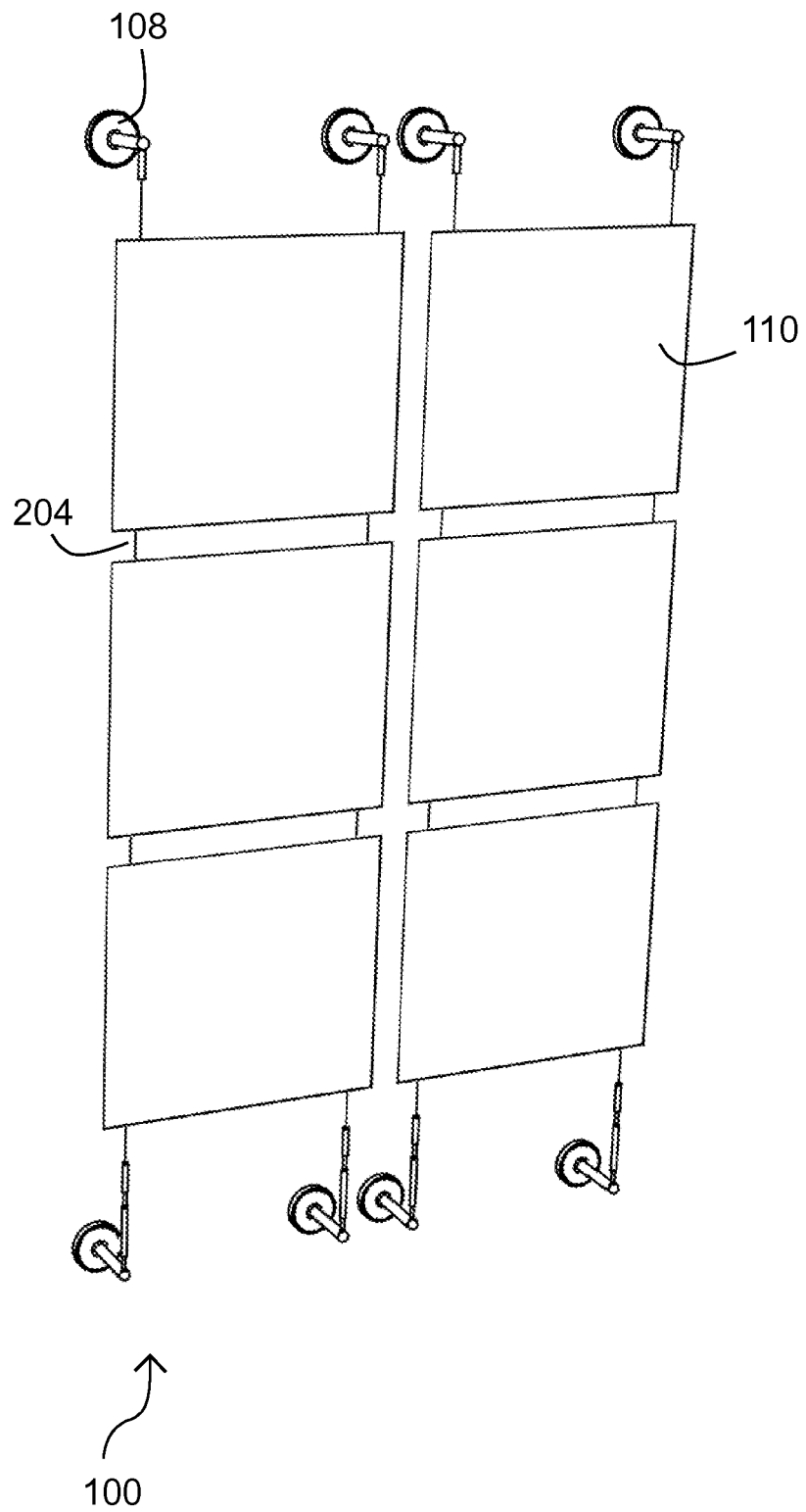
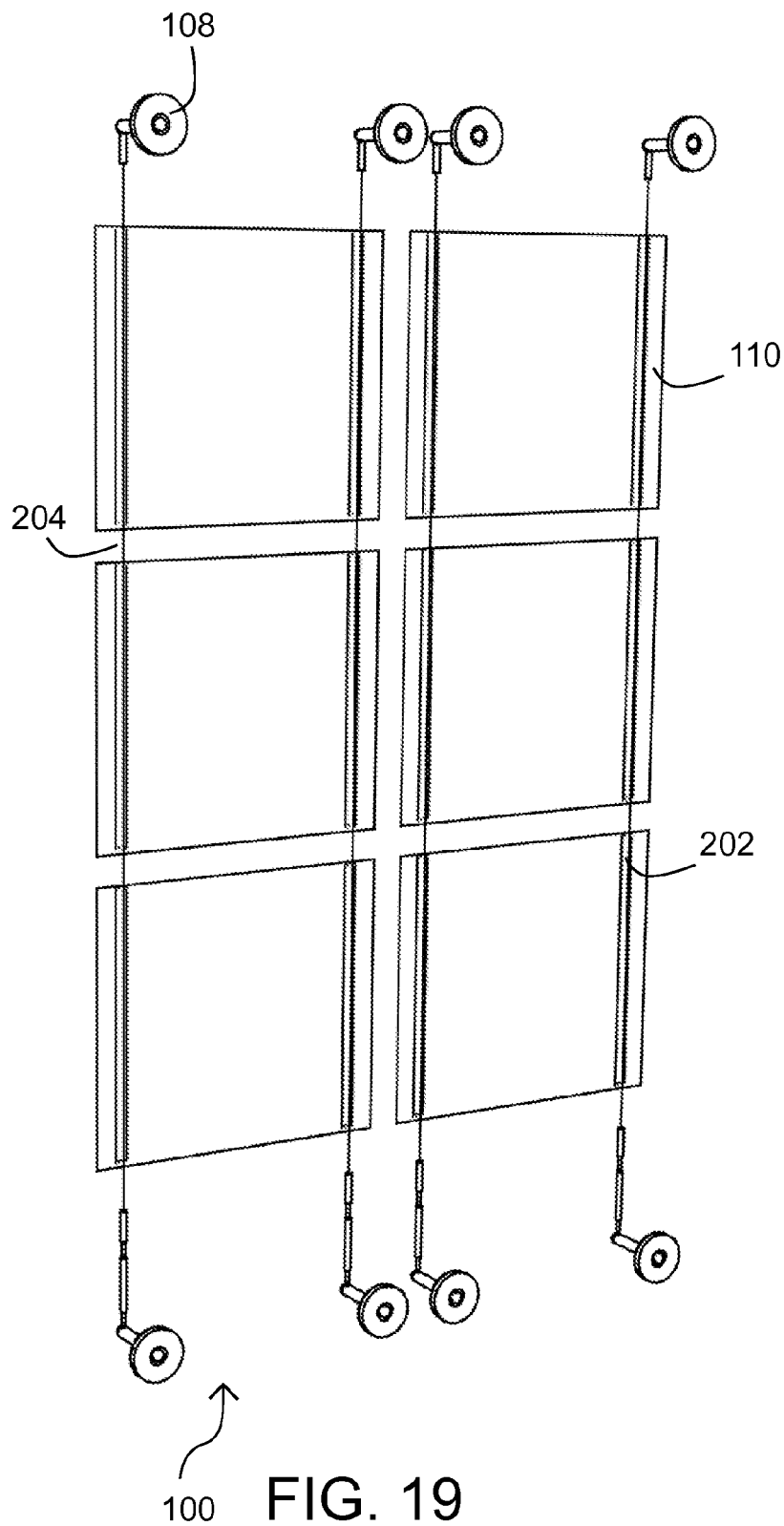


FIG. 18



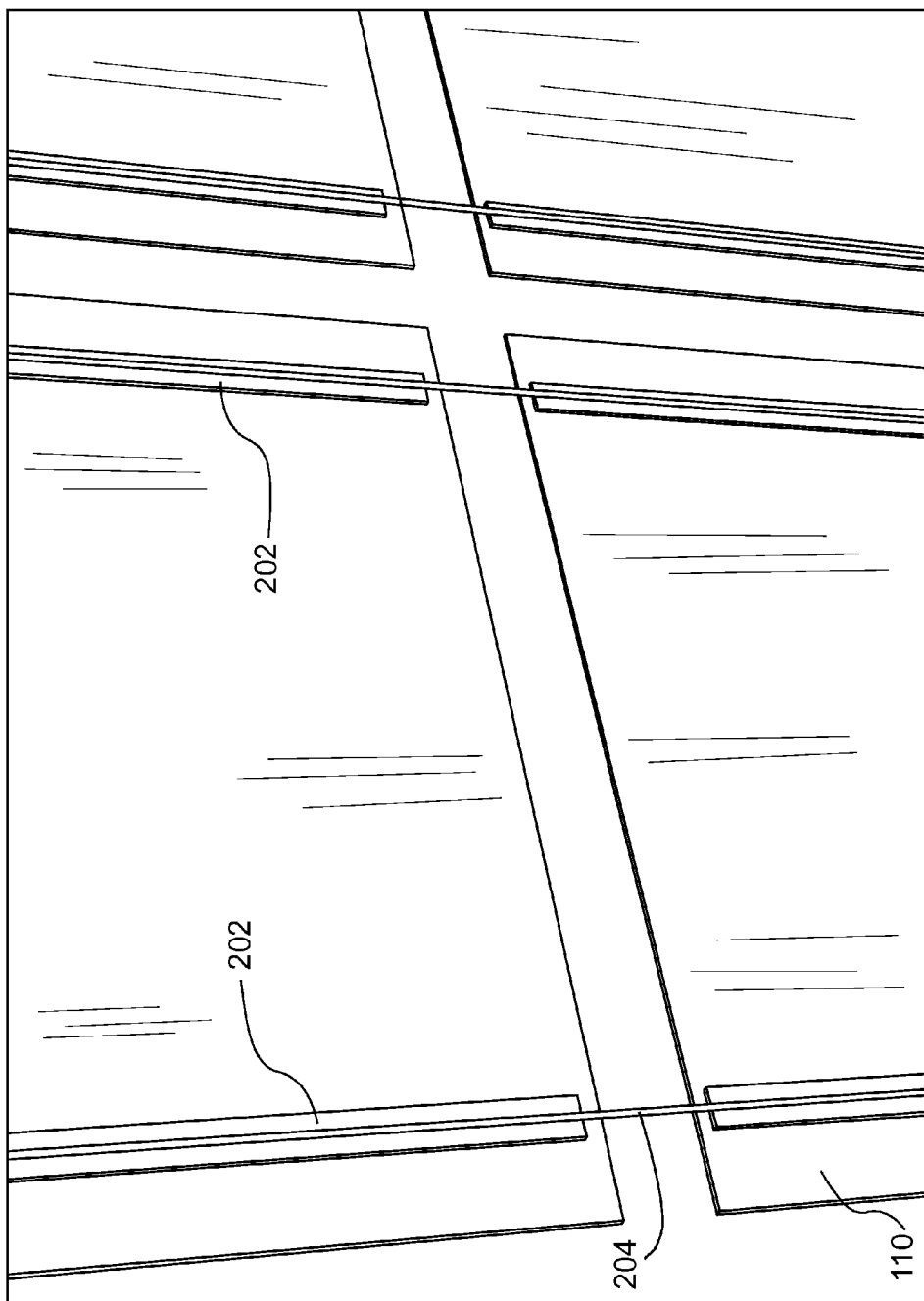


FIG. 20

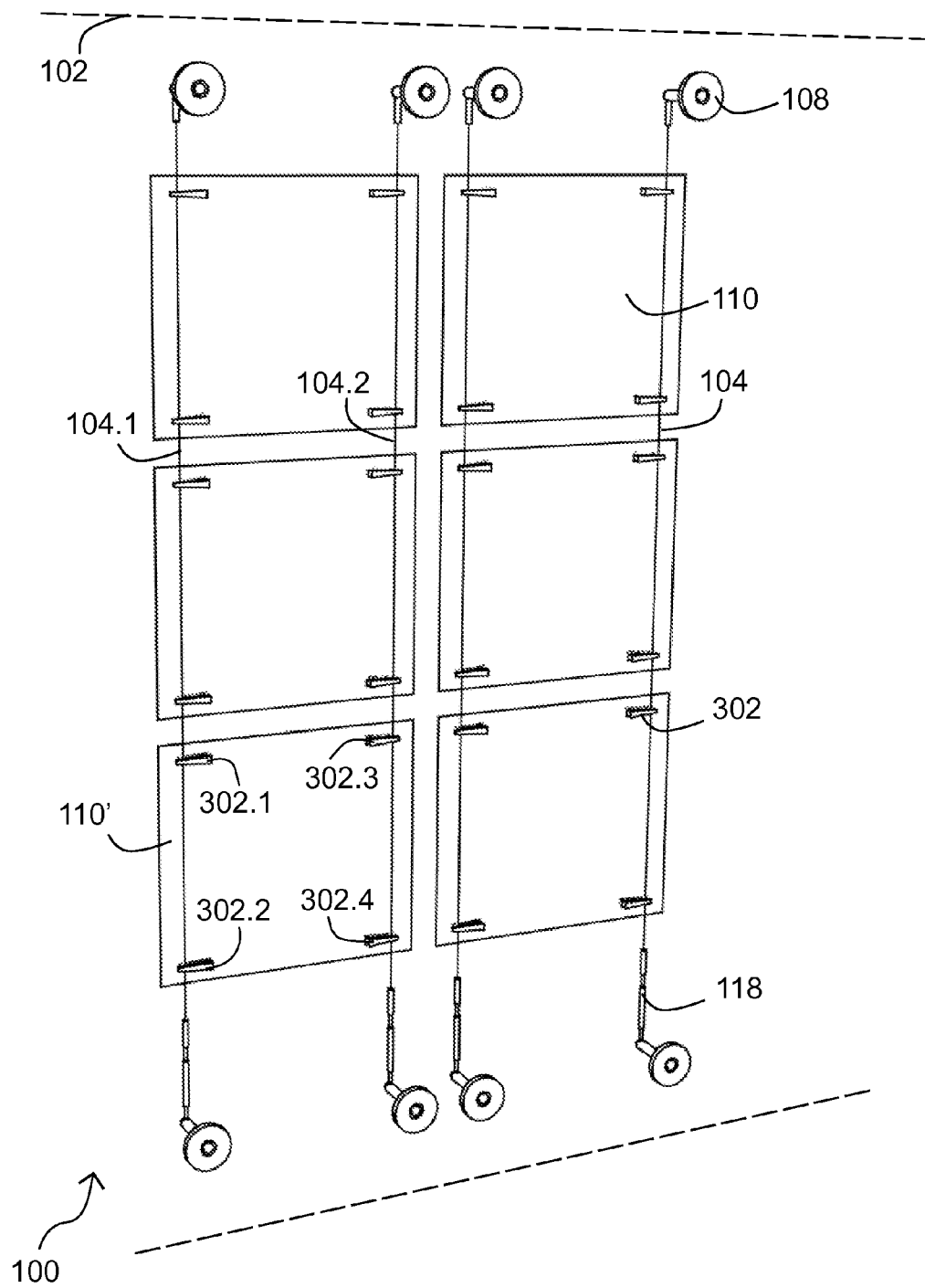


FIG. 21

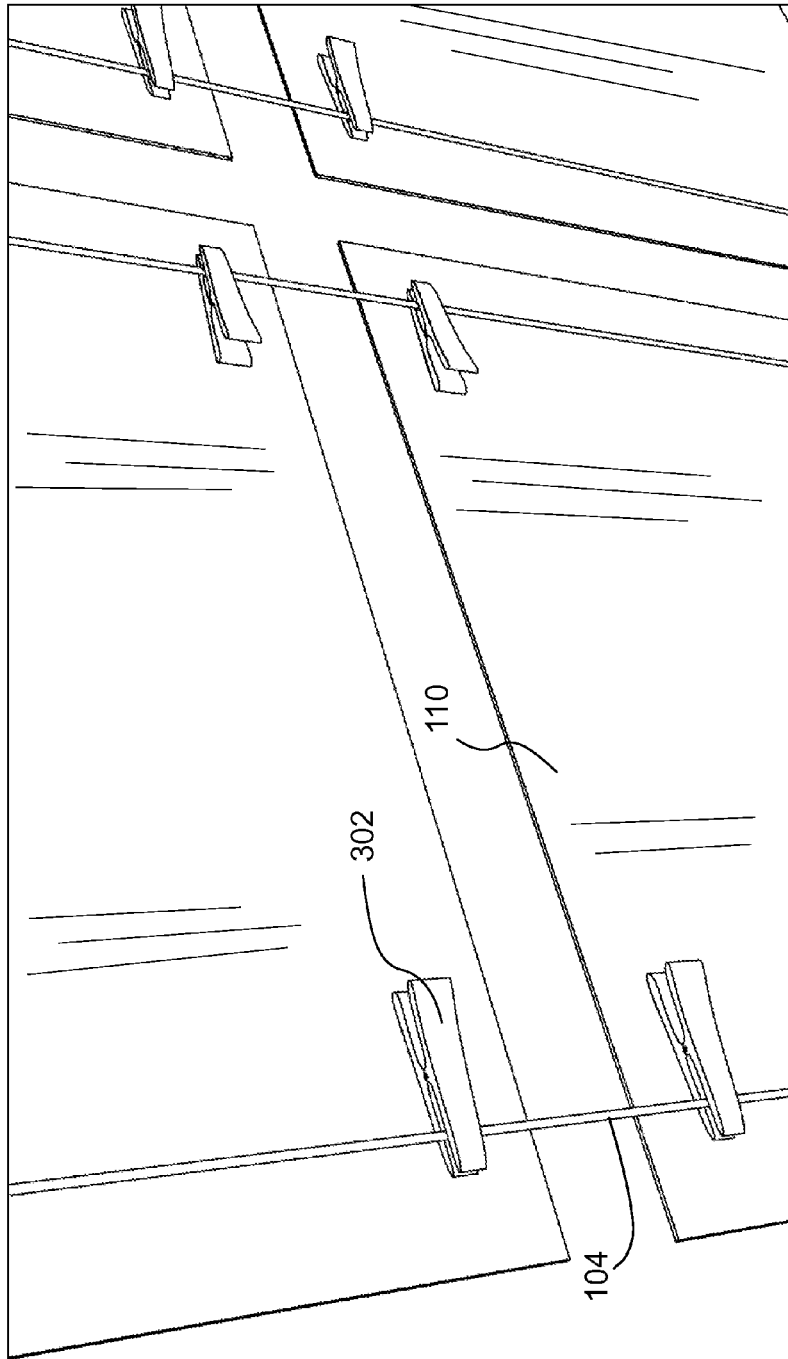


FIG. 22

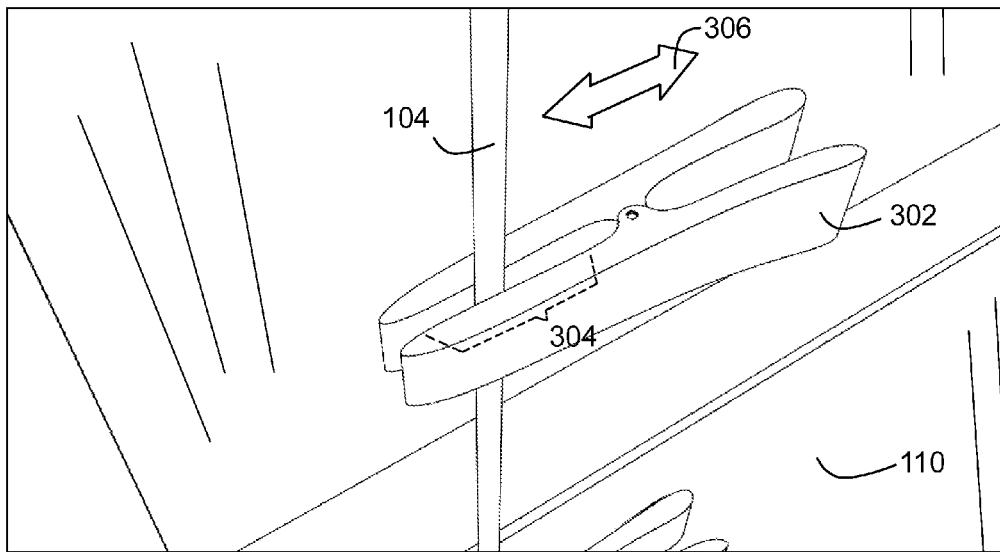


FIG. 23

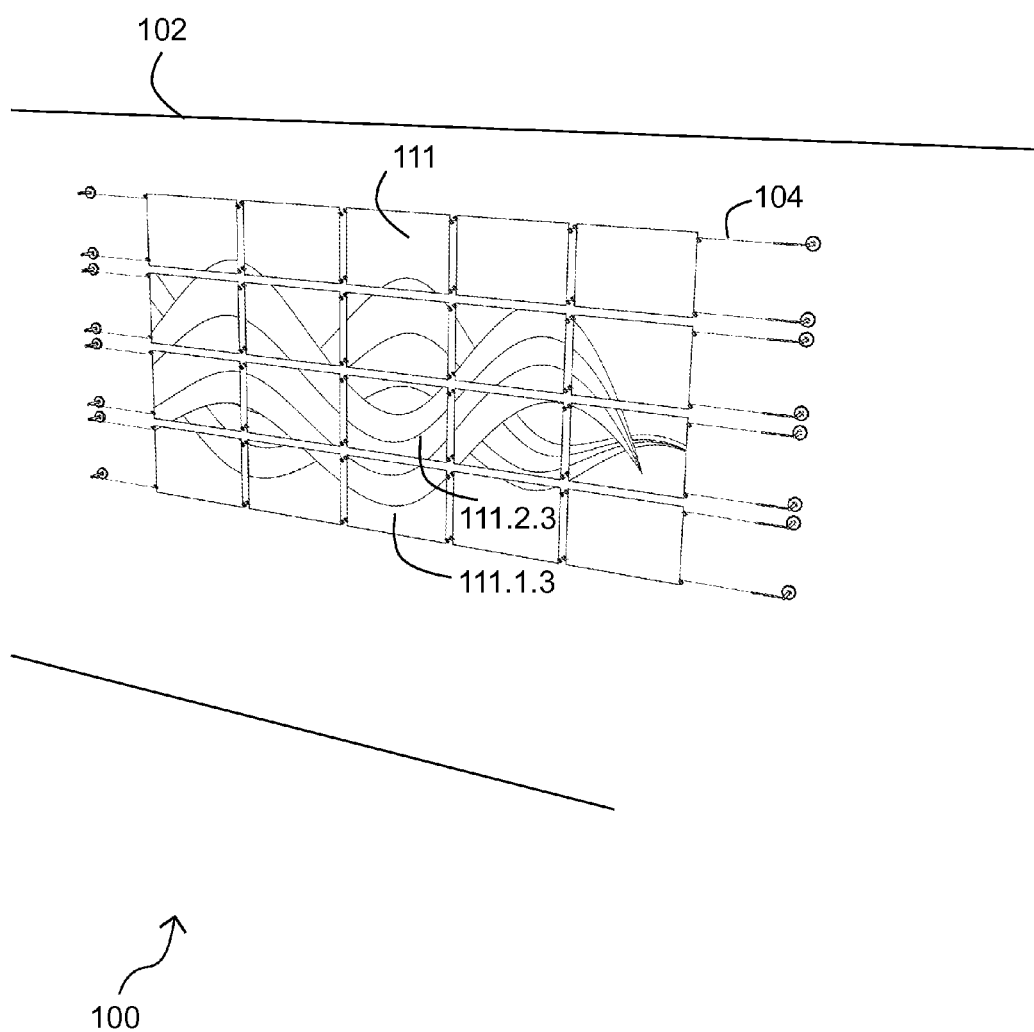


FIG. 24

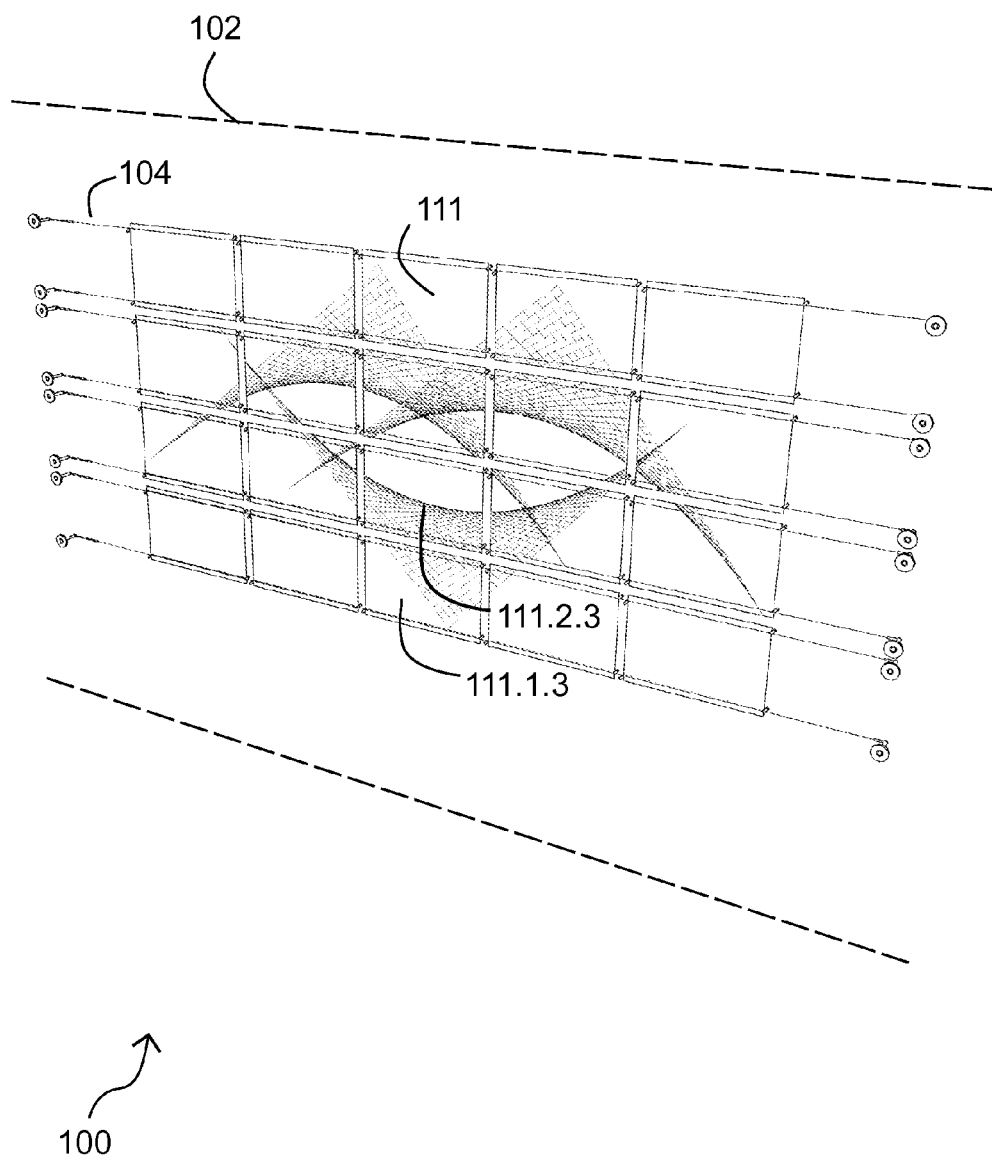


FIG. 25

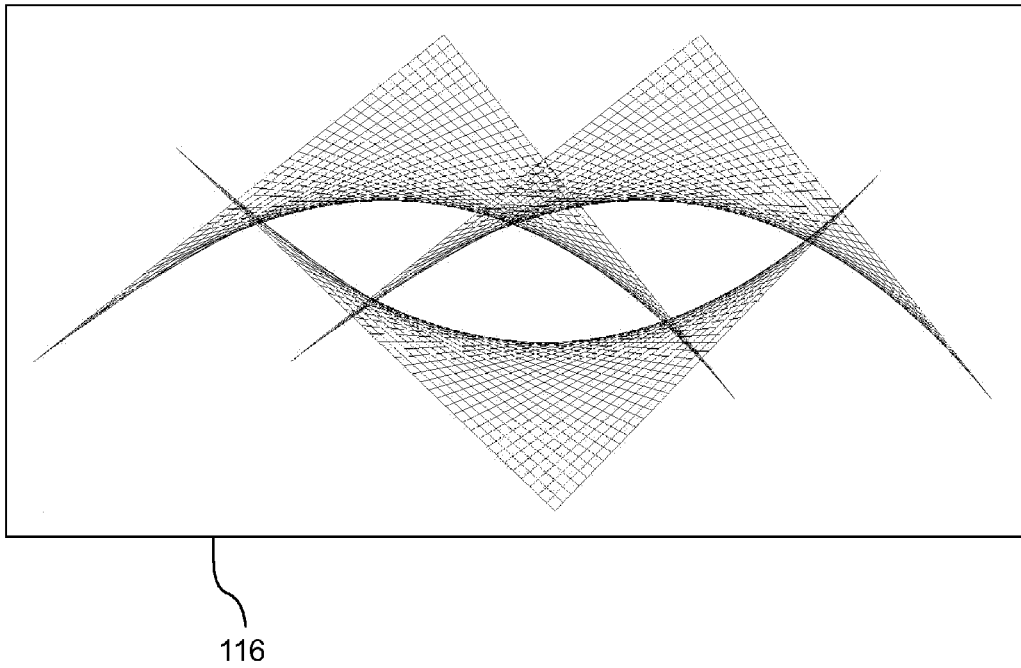


FIG. 26

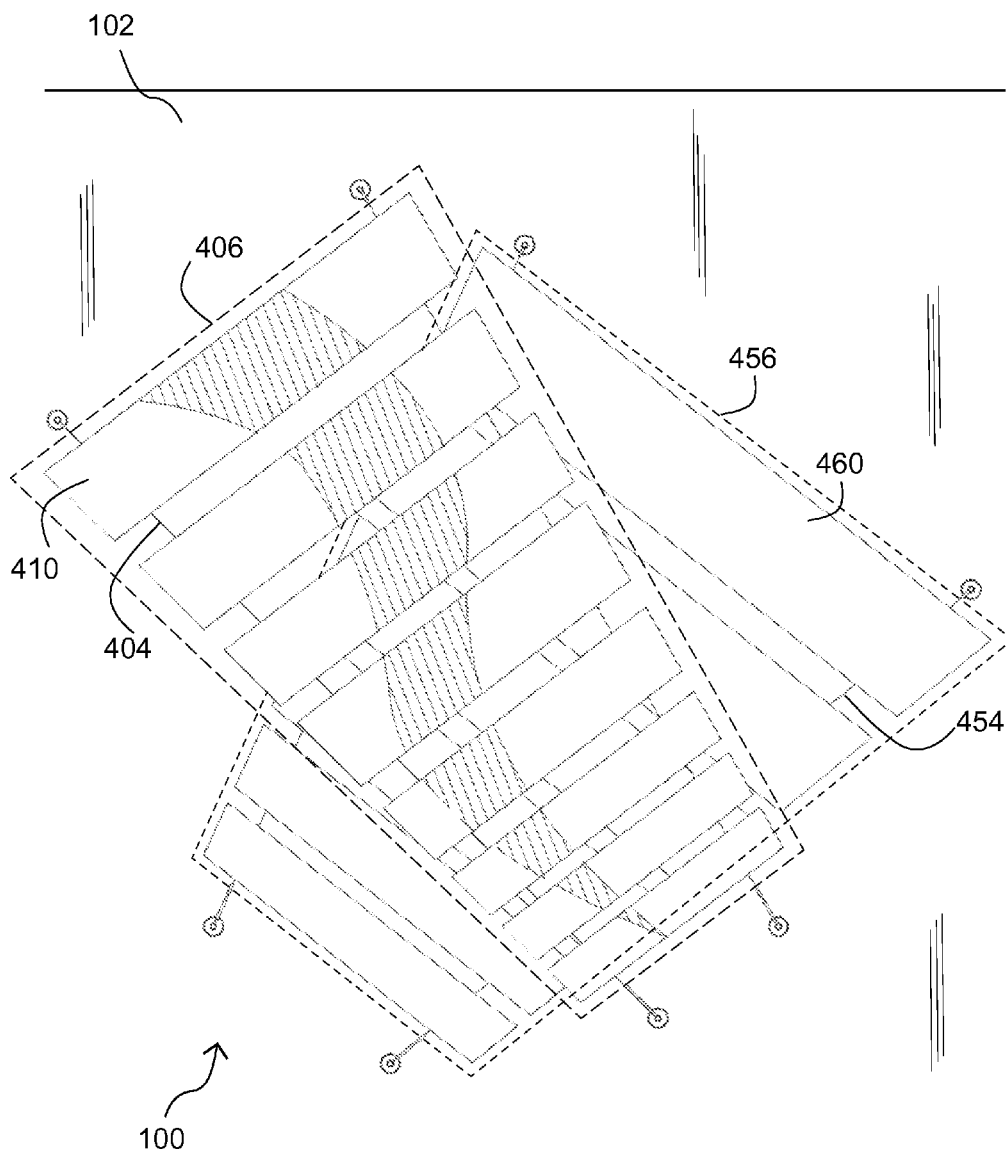


FIG. 27

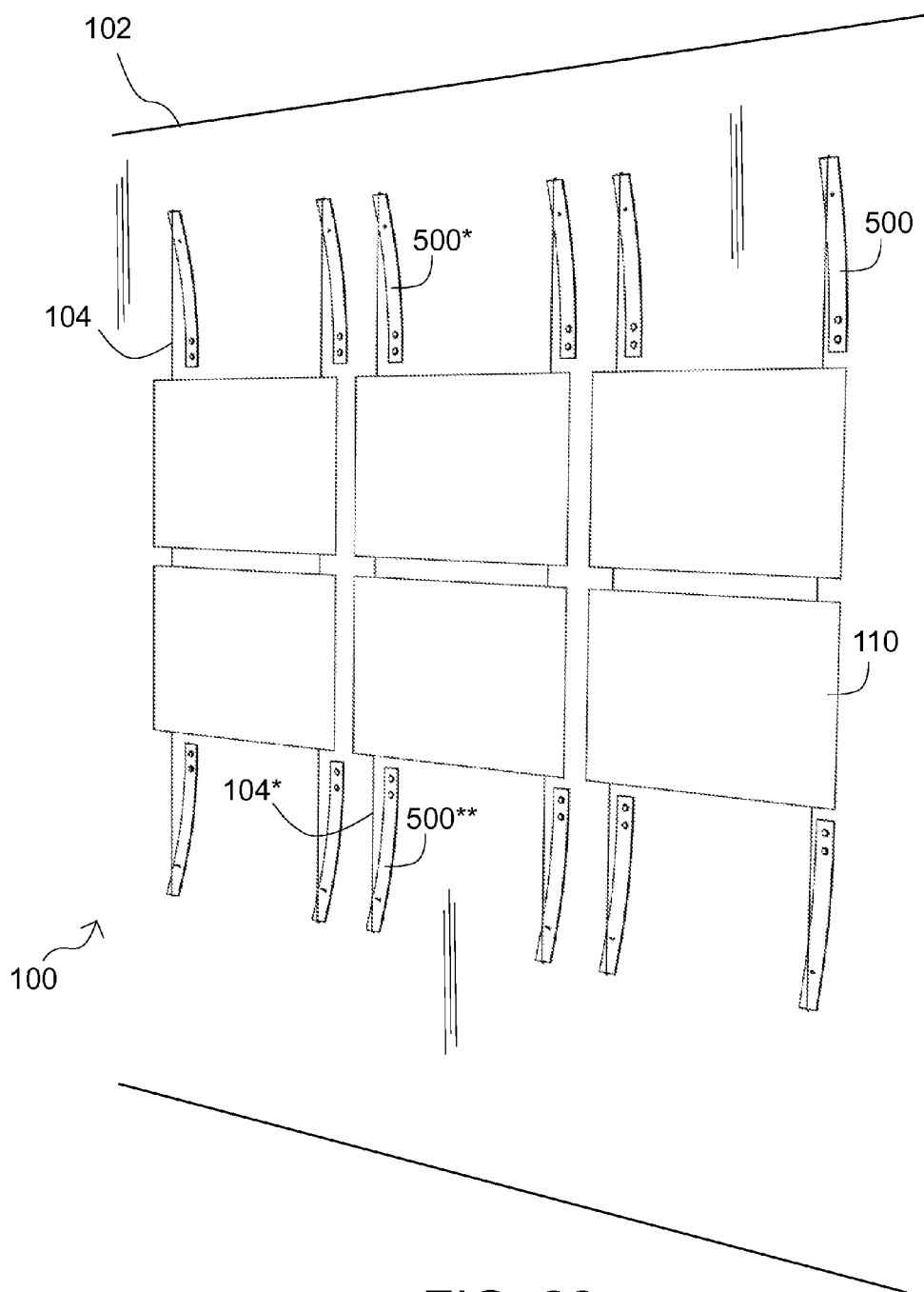


FIG. 28

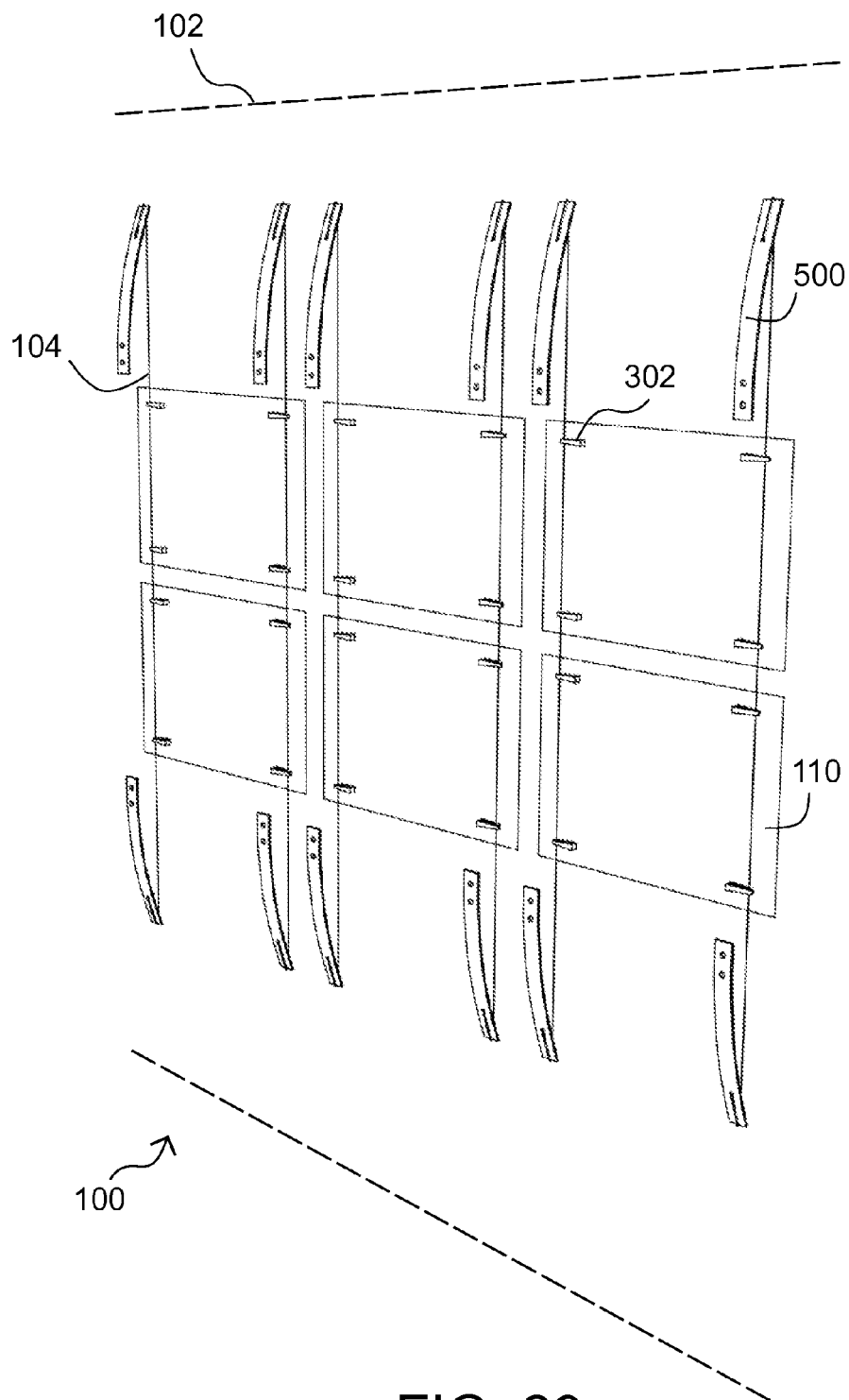


FIG. 29

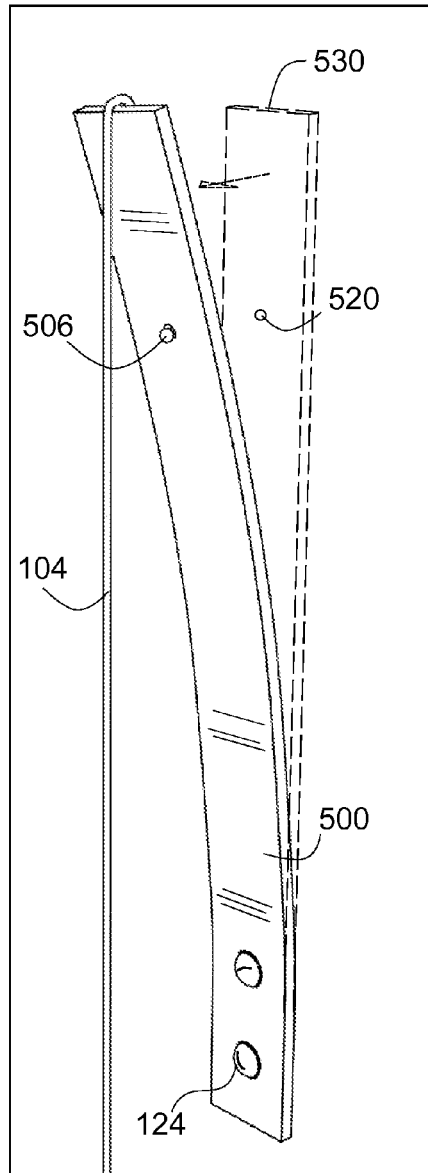


FIG. 30a

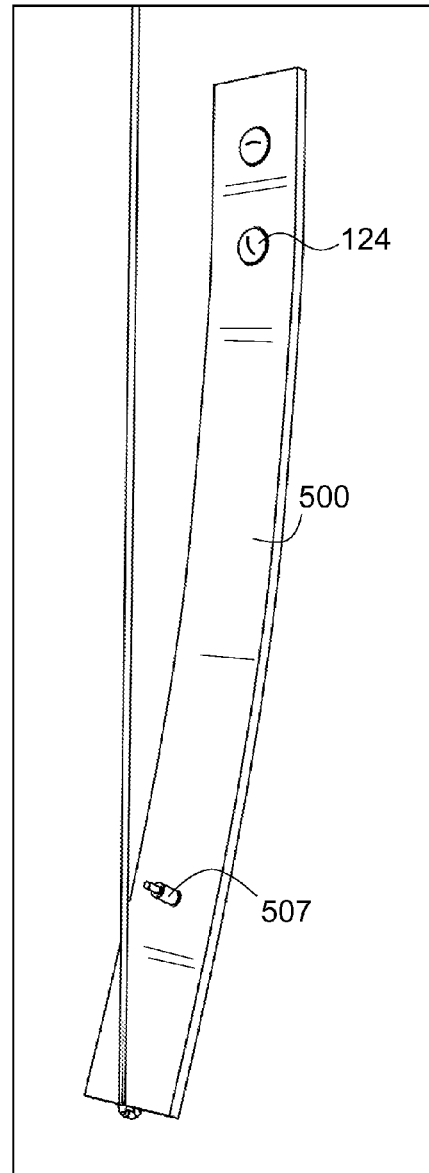


FIG. 30b

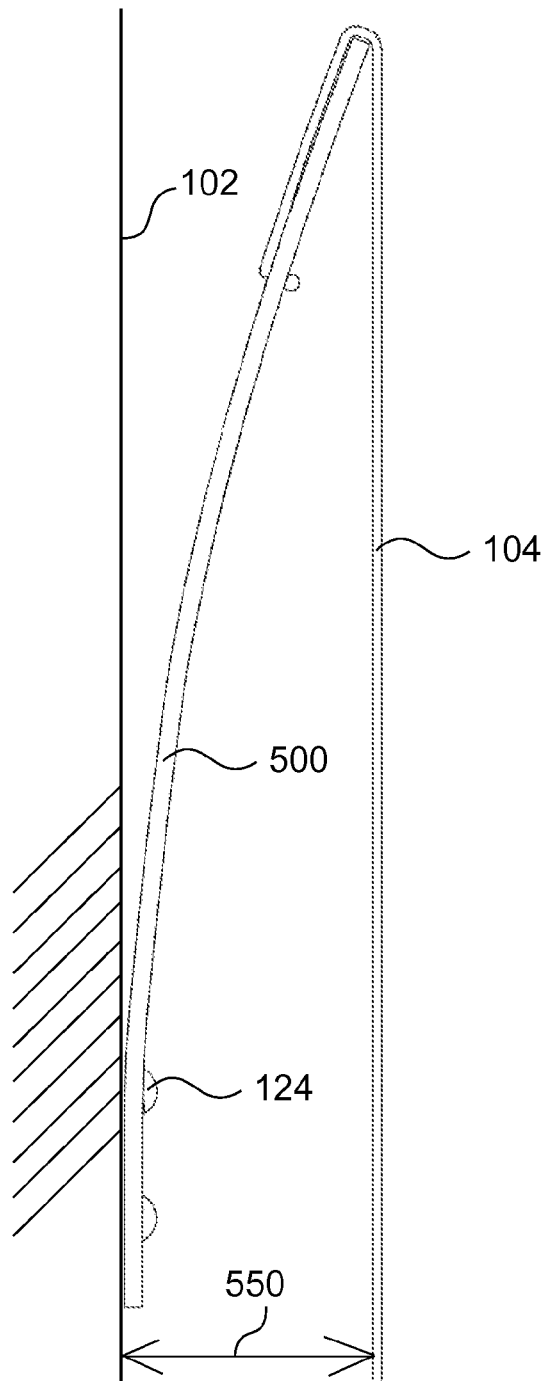


FIG. 31

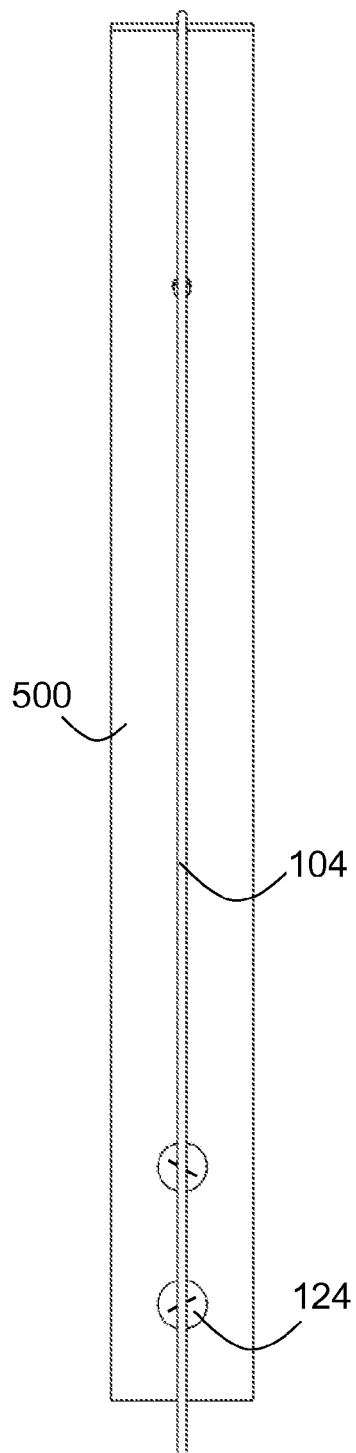


FIG. 32

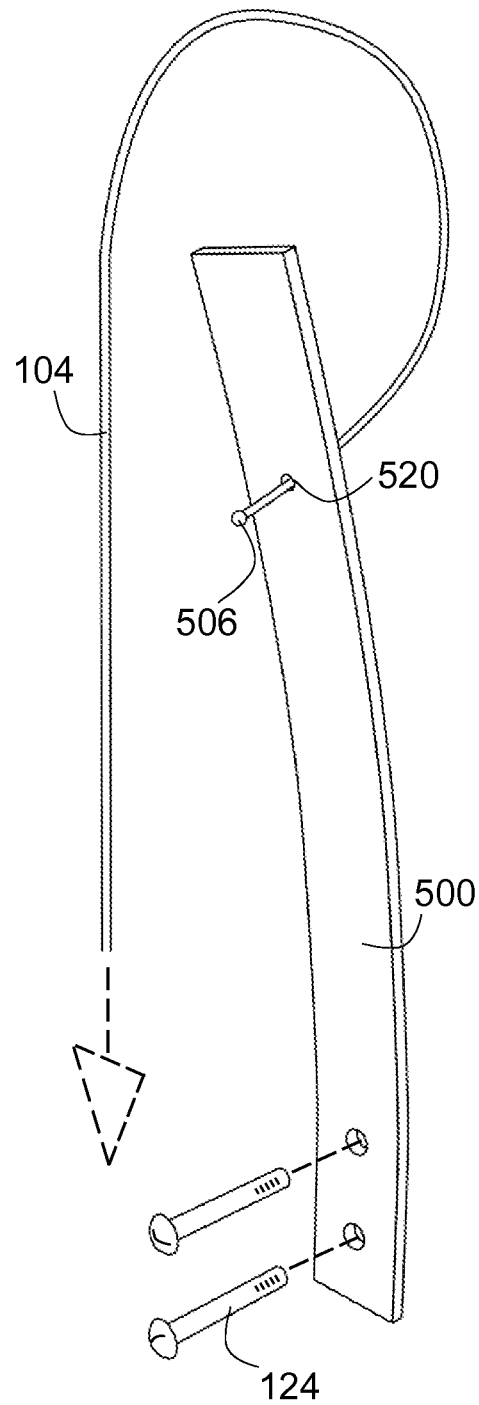


FIG. 33

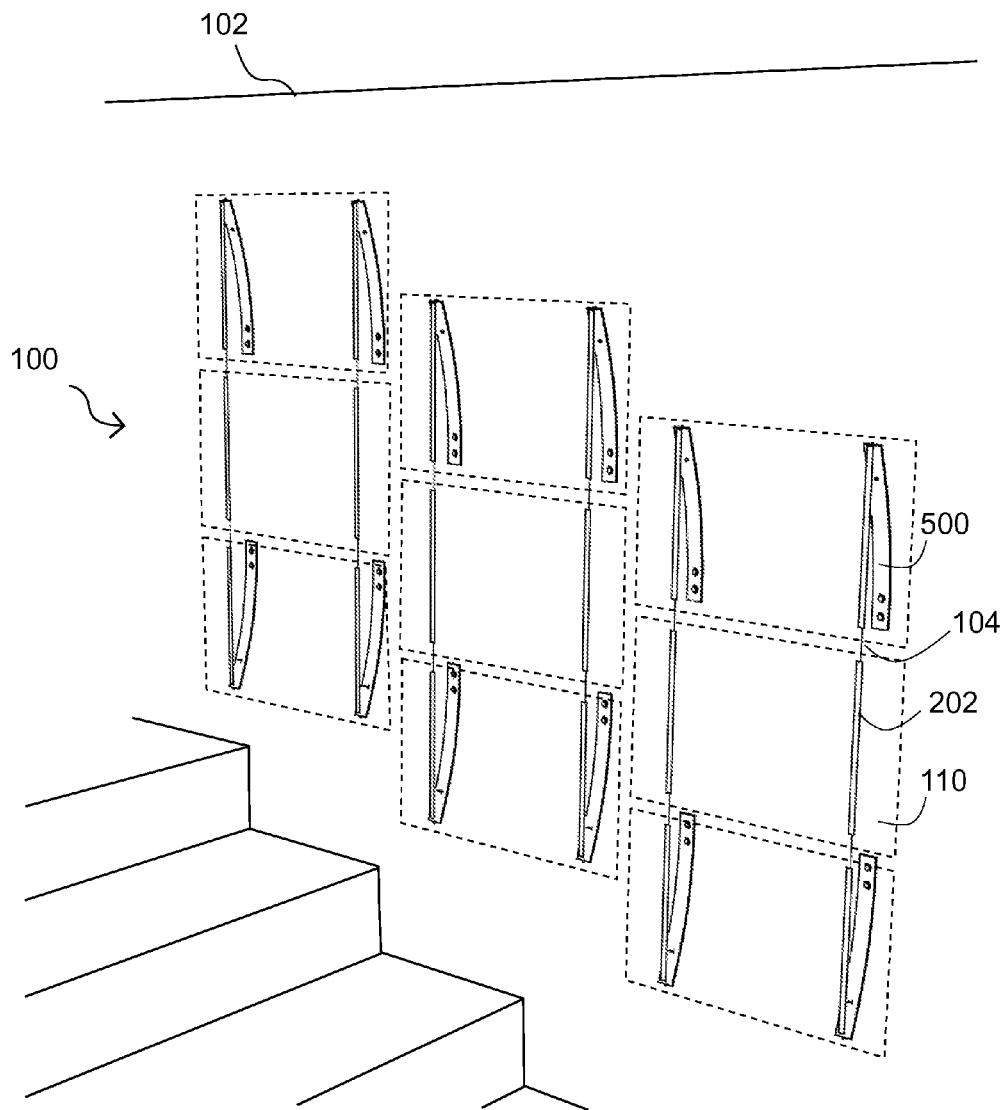


FIG. 34

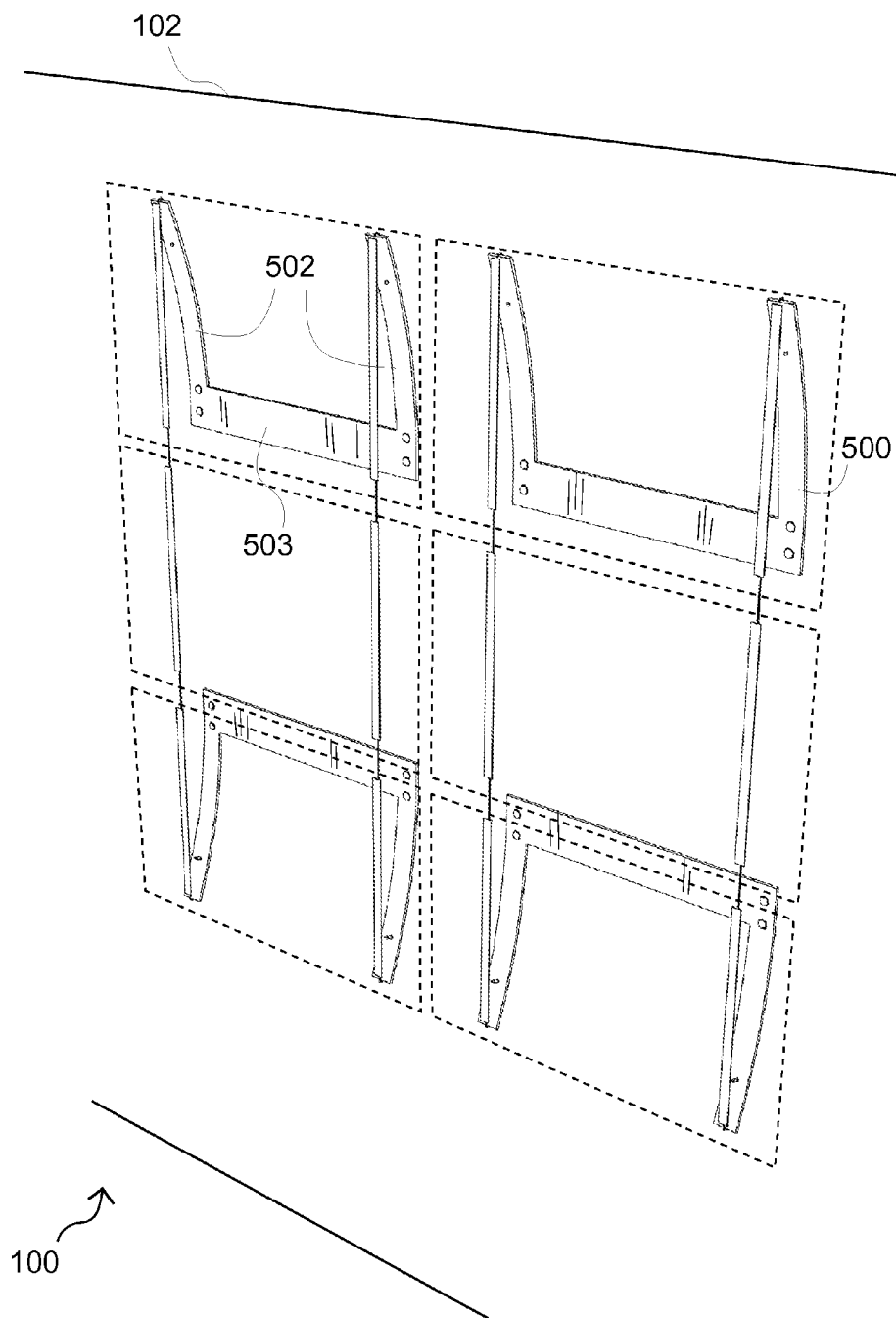


FIG. 35

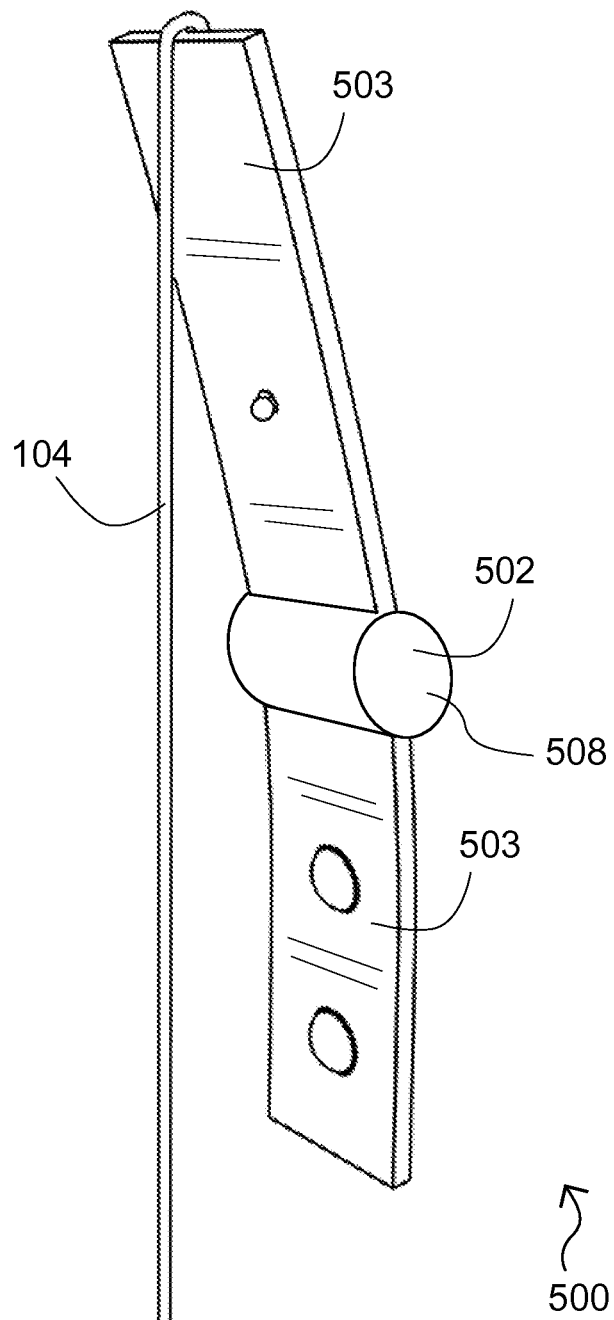


FIG. 36

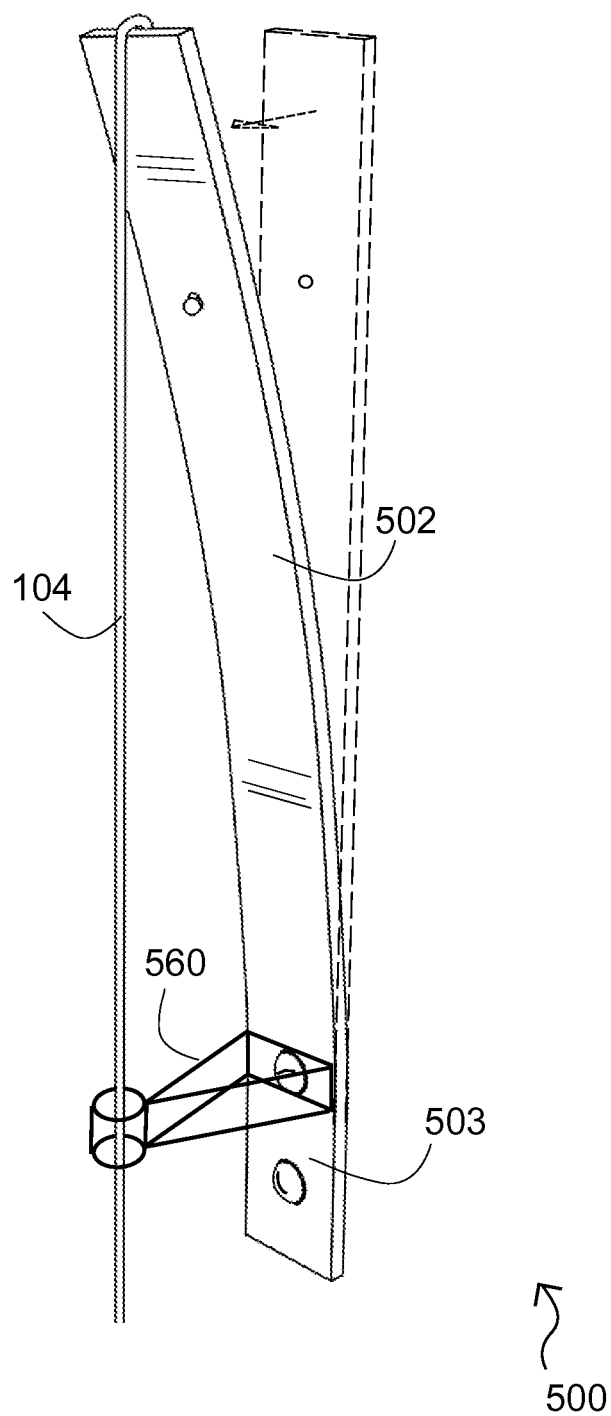


FIG. 37

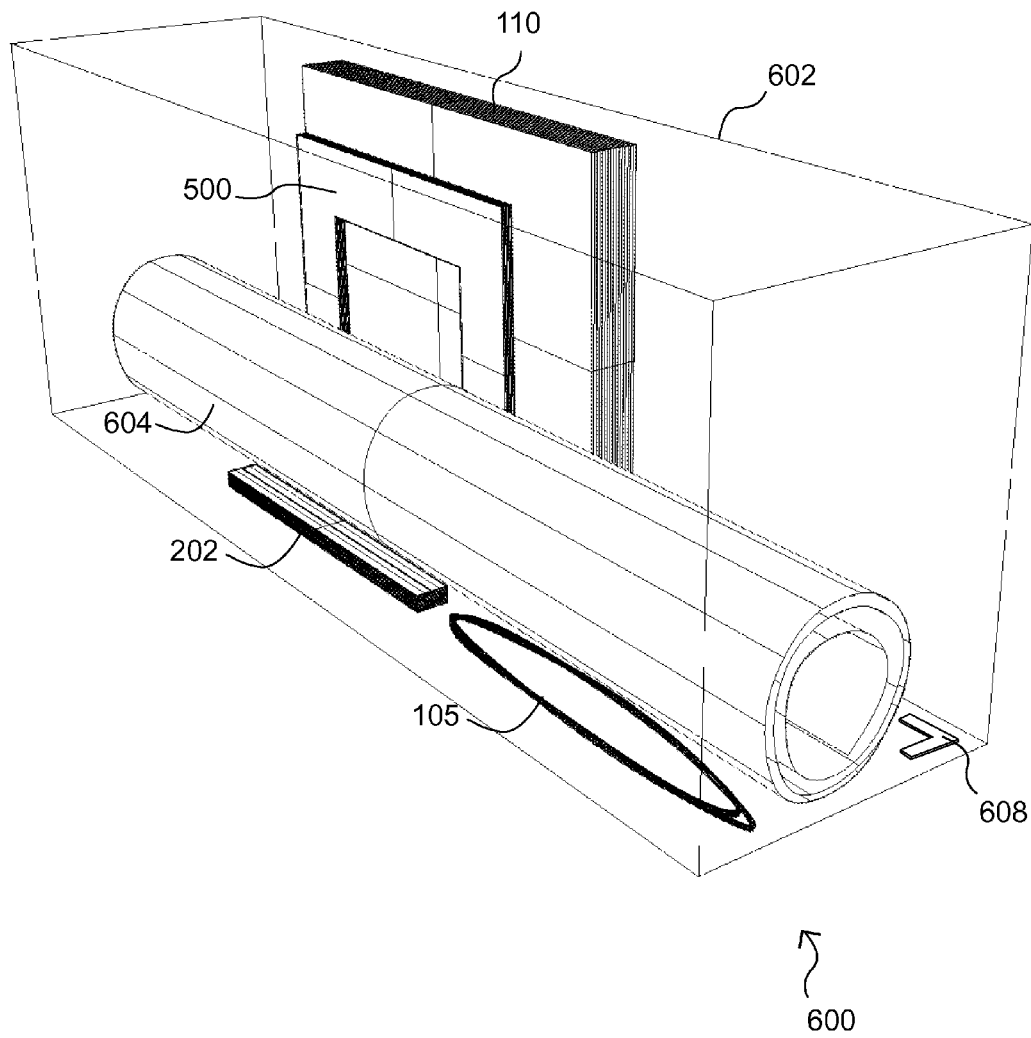


FIG. 38

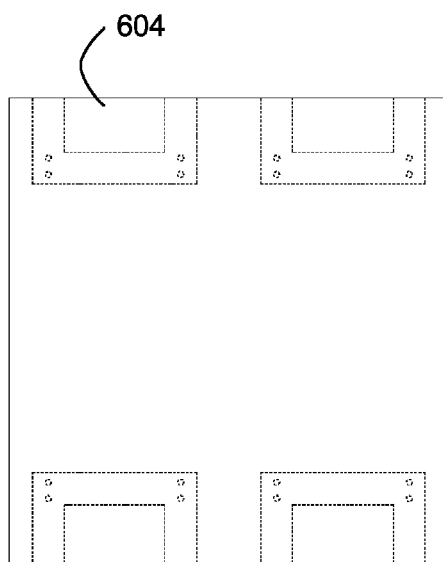


FIG. 39a

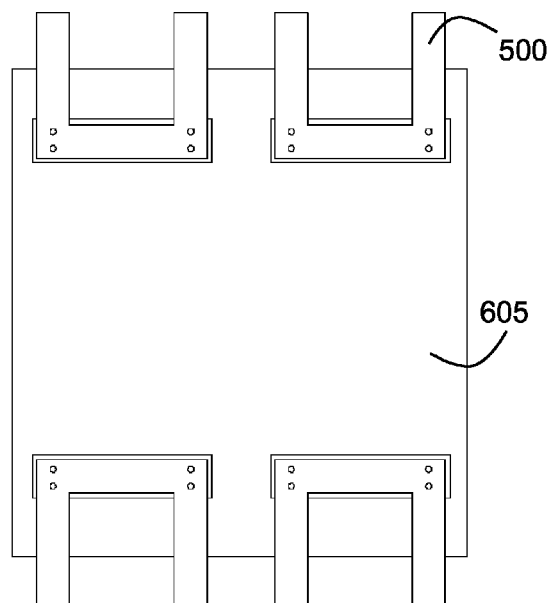


FIG. 39b

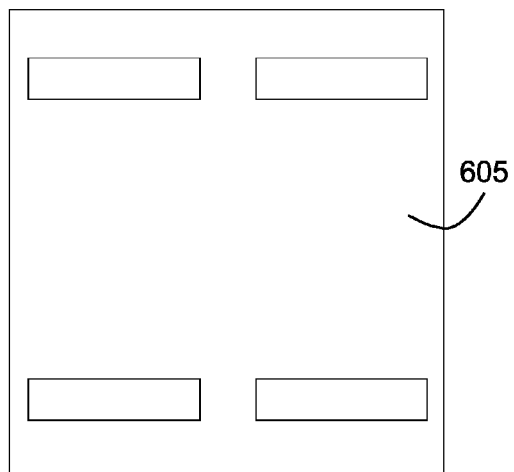


FIG. 39c

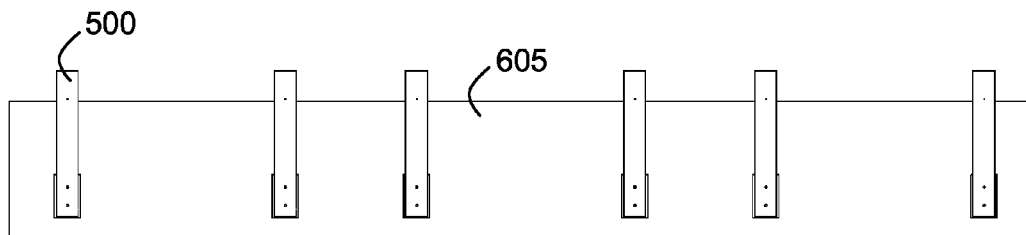


FIG. 40a

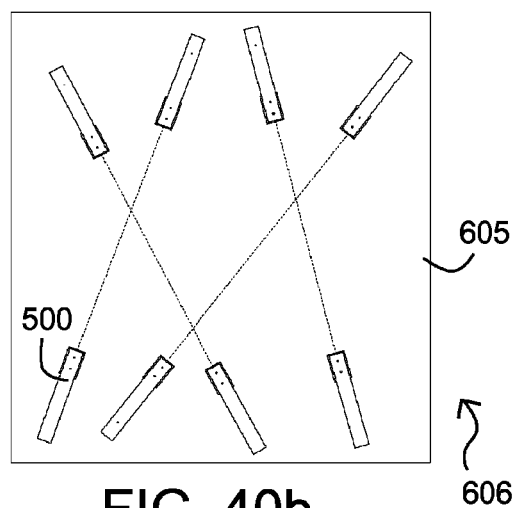


FIG. 40b

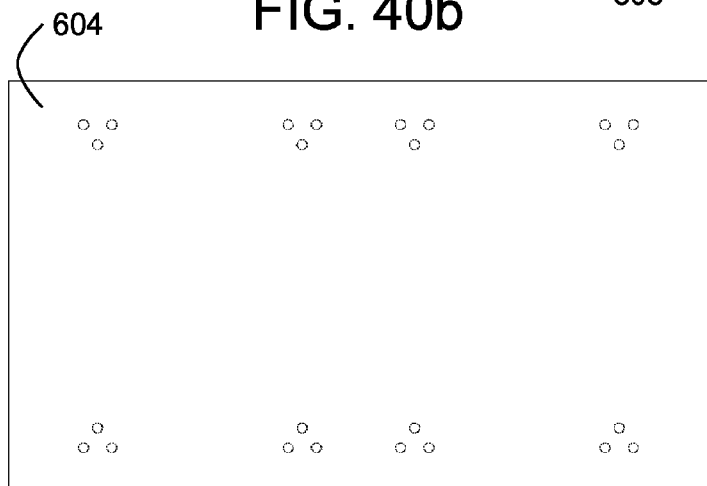


FIG. 40c

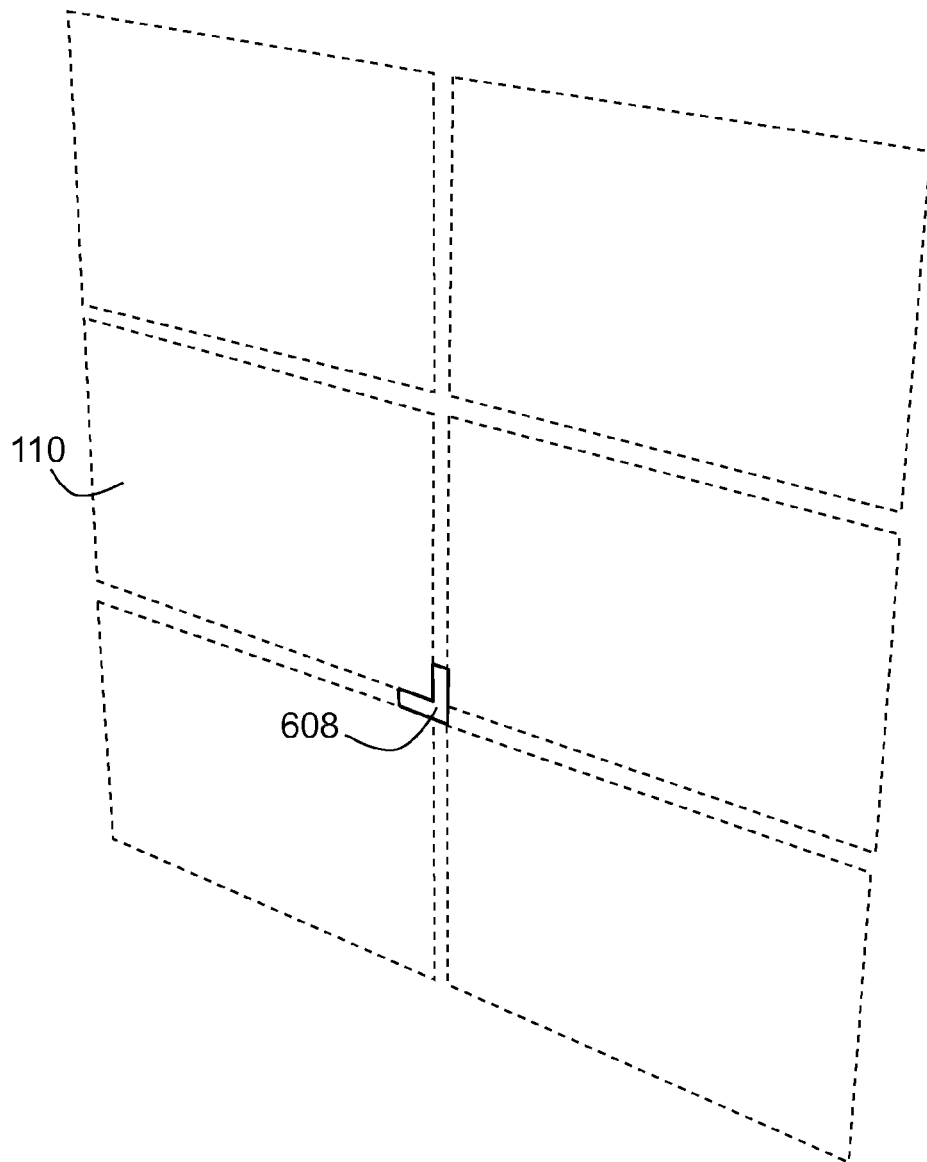


FIG. 41

SUSPENDED SEGMENTED DISPLAY ARRAY**REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION**

This application claims the benefit of priority under 35 U.S.C. §119(e) to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/550,369 filed Oct. 21, 2011 by the present inventor, which is herein incorporated by reference.

FIELD OF INVENTION

The present invention generally relates to display devices, and more particularly to a display system for presenting segmented panels on or near walls or other building surfaces. Such a system has multiple uses, including decorative capacities, especially facilitated when the panels themselves are artwork, photographs, ornate materials, or other decorative media.

BACKGROUND

The prior art shows examples of display systems that facilitate the presentation of panel arrays. For example, U.S. Pat. No. 7,934,331 to Zlotocha, provides a system for presenting arrays of photographs and the like using wall-mounted structural component assemblies. U.S. Pat. No. 7,086,190 to Voluckas also allows for the presentation of planar visuals, where components such as elastic cord, slotted tubular members, floor anchors, and different cord interfaces are used for this purpose. Cord is also used in the wall hanging device provided by U.S. Pat. No. 6,820,853 to DuBarry, which uses a mounting structure fixably attached to a wall below which multiple display items are hung. U.S. Pat. No. 4,897,944 to Otake et al. discloses a print holder in which a plurality of pockets or open-ended envelopes are intended to hold elemental prints that are part of a larger main image.

Additional examples of previous panel array products include the display system by Griplock Systems, Inc of Carpinteria, Calif. sold under the trade name "Art Track" which is representative of a broader class of commercial display products where two opposing long, thin wall-mounted members support a plurality of parallel cables to which display items are mounted.

Several of the prior art systems listed above, however, are quite hardware-intensive, making use of long, bulky, or numerous parts. This results in greater expense in manufacturing and shipping. The visual prominence associated with bulky hardware is generally not desirable given that one of the central purposes of these products is to present art or other visual media. Complexity is also a common drawback in one or more of the referenced prior art examples, correspondingly relating to higher cost and more substantial installation effort with greater likelihood for errors. Several of these systems further suffer from lack of versatility pertaining to their inability to accommodate different panel types and sizes. Several of these systems further present impediments to ready panel change-out, therefore negatively impacting the usability of the systems.

SUMMARY

Various selected embodiments are herein disclosed for a segmented display array in summary form. In accordance with one embodiment, a segmented display array comprises suspended elongated member segments, composed of, for example, cable or cord, that are routed to substantially lie within a plane. Standoff members, that are attached to a wall

or other building surface, serve the purpose of securing these elongated member segments in position. Display panels, such as mounted photos or graphics, are directly coupled to the elongated member segments using releasable clamps. Two elongated member segments are generally associated with each display panel, and one or more clamps are generally used to grip the regions in which these parts make contact, affording stability to the assembly. Such a display array allows for highly versatile usage, where a broad range of display panel types and sizes can be used for a given hardware installation. For example, mounted art prints can be secured to this system, as can translucent acrylic sheets, or elements of a collage of varying size. Also, display panel change-out is well facilitated.

In another embodiment, a segmented display array comprises suspended elongated member segments, composed of, for example, cable, that are routed to substantially lie within a plane. Standoff members, that are attached to a wall or other building surface, serve the purpose of securing these elongated member segments in position. Display panels, such as mounted photos or graphics, are releasably coupled to the elongated member segments using permanent magnets, making for a changeable display in which the display panel fastening means (the magnets) are not visible from the front. Using a ferromagnetic material for the elongated member segments, and adhering magnets to the back of the display panels provides a simple and versatile implementation on this embodiment.

Finally, in accordance with a third embodiment, a segmented display array comprises suspended elongated member segments, composed of, for example, cable or cord, that are routed to substantially lie within a plane. Standoff members, that are attached to a wall or other building surface, serve the purpose of securing these elongated member segments in position. Display panels, such as mounted photos or graphics, are securely coupled on their back sides to clamps with extended stable grip regions. These clamps releasably clamp to the elongated member segments, affording the system stability and adjustability, yet hiding the clamps from the viewer. Like the other embodiments, simplicity here makes for enhanced functionality and versatility, as will be seen in greater detail.

Thus several advantages of one or more aspects are that the segmented display array uses hardware (such as cables directly connected to standoff members and low- or no-visibility panel mounting means) that is compact and minimal, making for cost and shipping advantages, as well as minimized hardware visual prominence. Other advantages of one or more aspects are that the segmented display array complexity is low, providing cost savings and further reducing the installation effort and possibilities of mistakes/malfunctions associated with many unique parts. Other advantages of one or more aspects are that the segmented display array has a high level of versatility; for example, different sized panels can be accommodated on one or more embodiments, as can panels of different material types, and panels can readily be changed out.

This summary is provided to introduce a selection of concepts in a simplified form that, along with additional concepts, are described in further detail in the detailed description and drawings contained herein. This summary is not intended to identify key features or essential features of the claimed subject matter, nor is it intended to be used as an aid in determining the scope of the claimed subject matter. Yet other concepts, forms, embodiments, advantages, benefits, features, and aspects of the present invention will become

apparent from the detailed description and drawings contained herein, as well as from the claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a front perspective view of a segmented display array in accordance with one embodiment.

FIG. 2 shows the larger coherent image corresponding to the image displayed in FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 is a front perspective close up view of a portion of FIG. 1 showing a standoff member and length adjustable member.

FIG. 4 is a front perspective exploded view of a standoff member from FIG. 1 and the associated mounting hardware.

FIG. 5 is a front perspective close up view of a portion of FIG. 1 showing a standoff member receiving an elongated member segment.

FIG. 6 is a front perspective close up view of a portion of FIG. 1 showing how the display panels are clamped to the elongated member segments.

FIG. 7 is a perspective close up view of the back of the region shown in FIG. 6 showing how the display panels are clamped to the elongated member segments.

FIG. 8 is a front perspective view of a segmented display array in accordance with another embodiment that uses compressive members.

FIG. 9 is a back perspective close up view of several display panels shown in FIG. 8.

FIG. 10 is a front perspective view of an embodiment of a segmented display array where a single elongated member is used to establish multiple elongated member segments.

FIG. 11 is a front perspective close up view of a portion of FIG. 10 showing one of the standoff members used.

FIG. 12 is an isolated view of the standoff member shown in FIG. 11.

FIG. 13 is a direct front view of the segmented display array of FIG. 10.

FIG. 14 is a front view of the segmented display array shown in FIG. 13, but with an alternate display panel used.

FIGS. 15-17 show front views of alternate single elongated member routing schemes used to achieve various visual and functional effects.

FIG. 18 is a front perspective view of an embodiment of a segmented display array in which permanent magnets are used to achieve releasable display panel coupling.

FIG. 19 is a back perspective view of the segmented display array shown in FIG. 18.

FIG. 20 is a back perspective close up view of a portion of FIG. 19.

FIG. 21 is a back perspective view of an embodiment of a segmented display array in which bonded clamps secure display panels to elongated member segments.

FIG. 22 is a back perspective close up view of a portion of FIG. 21.

FIG. 23 is a back perspective close up view of a portion of FIG. 22.

FIG. 24 is a front perspective view of an embodiment of a reversible segmented display array.

FIG. 25 is a back perspective view of the reversible segmented display array shown in FIG. 24.

FIG. 26 shows the larger coherent image corresponding to the rear faces of display panels as seen in

FIG. 27 shows a front view of an embodiment of a two-level segmented display array.

FIG. 28 is a front perspective view of a segmented display array in accordance with an embodiment that uses flexible standoff members.

FIG. 29 is a back perspective view of the segmented display array embodiment of FIG. 28.

FIGS. 30*a, b* are front perspective close up views of the top and bottom respective flexible standoff members used in the display array embodiment of FIG. 28.

FIG. 31 is a side view of a flexible standoff member used in the top row of the display array embodiment of FIG. 28.

FIG. 32 is a front view of a flexible standoff member used in the top row of the display array embodiment of FIG. 28.

FIG. 33 is an exploded front perspective view of a flexible standoff member used in the top row of the display array embodiment of FIG. 28.

FIG. 34 is a front perspective view of a segmented display array in accordance with another embodiment that uses flexible standoff members and magnetic attachment means for display panels.

FIG. 35 is a front perspective view of a segmented display array in accordance with another embodiment that uses flexible standoff members and magnetic attachment means for display panels.

FIG. 36 is a front perspective view of a flexible standoff member embodiment that uses a torsional spring as the elastic element.

FIG. 37 is a front perspective view of a flexible standoff member embodiment that has both an elastic element and a constant-distance member.

FIG. 38 is a perspective view of an embodiment of a kit for installing a segmented display array.

FIG. 39*a, b, c* are plan views of different template embodiments helpful in installing standoff members.

FIG. 40*a, b, c* are additional plan views of template embodiments helpful in installing standoff members.

FIG. 41 is a perspective view with exemplary display panels and a spacer embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF SELECTED EMBODIMENTS

For the purposes of promoting and understanding the principles of the present invention, reference will now be made to the embodiments illustrated in the drawings and specific language will be used to describe the same. It will nevertheless be understood that no limitation of the scope of the invention is thereby intended. Alterations and further modification in the described embodiments, and further applications of the principles of the invention as described herein are contemplated as would normally occur to one skilled in the art to which the invention relates.

As used herein, the terms “comprises,” “comprising,” “includes,” “including,” “has,” “having” or any other variation thereof, are intended to cover a non-exclusive inclusion. For example, a process, method, article, or apparatus that comprises a list of elements is not necessarily limited to only those elements but may include other elements not expressly listed or inherent to such process, method, article, or apparatus. Further, unless expressly stated to the contrary, “or” refers to an inclusive “or” and not to an exclusive “or.” For example, a condition A or B is satisfied by any one of the following: A is true and B is false, A is false and B is true, and both A and B are true.

Also, use of the words “a” or “an” are employed to describe elements and components of the invention. This is done merely for convenience and to give a general sense of the invention. This description should be read to include one or at least one and the singular also includes the plural unless it is obvious that it is meant otherwise.

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Reference throughout this specification to “one embodiment” or “an embodiment” means that a particular feature, structure, or characteristic described in connection with the embodiment is included in at least one embodiment of the present invention. Thus, the appearance of the phrases “in one embodiment” or “in an embodiment” in various places throughout this specification are not necessarily all referring to the same embodiment. Furthermore, the particular features, structures, or characteristics may be combined in any suitable manner in one or more embodiments.

The terms “suspended segmented display array” or simply “segmented display array” are used throughout. In this context, consistent with the teachings of the present specification, “segmented” is understood to be two or more parts that collectively form a whole, and not just being an original whole that is broken into parts. Further, the term “array” is understood to be in reference to an arrangement of elements that might be regular (i.e. with uniform rows and columns) or irregular (no organization at all).

Embodiment Including Direct Panel Clamping

In accordance with one embodiment of the segmented display array, FIG. 1 shows a segmented display array 100 composed of elongated member segments 104 that can individually more precisely be identified as 104.1-104.8 (ordered bottom to top in FIG. 1) that are horizontally-suspended substantially within a plane 106. These elongated member segments 104 are made of cable in this embodiment, but other materials or components are suitable such as wire, rope, thread, string, cord, monofilament, tubing, bars, and rods. Standoff members 108 hold the cables in place. The standoff members 108 can more precisely individually be identified as 108.01-108.08 (ordered bottom to top in FIG. 1) connected to one end of the elongated member segments 104 and as 108.11-108.18 (also bottom to top) connected to the other ends, respectively. These standoffs 108 in turn mount to a building surface 102, which could be a wall, ceiling, or floor, and could be on the interior or exterior of a building. Display panels 110 are releasably coupled directly to adjacent elongated member segments 104 via clamps 112. Each display panel in the array can be more precisely defined by a respective row decimal and a column decimal, with the 20 panels ranging from 110.1.1 to 110.4.5. The clamps 112 are akin to alligator clips which have elastically coupled opposing halves that can be operated by finger pressure. Other such finger-releasable clamps that would occur to those skilled in the art could also be used, as could clamps that have locks on them to serve as theft deterrents for the display panels 110. This embodiment is noted to have two elongated member segments 104 per display panel row. Tension is generated in these elongated member segments 104.1-104.8 using length adjustment members 118, which more specifically include 118.1-118.8 which most preferably are turnbuckles but other components such as springs could be used for this purpose.

Still referring to FIG. 1, various display panels 110 have images different than several other of the display panels 110, but together they form a part of a larger coherent image 116, as shown in FIG. 2. For example, referring back to FIG. 1, display panel 110.2.5 displays curved lines a, b, c, and d coming to a point, and display panel 110.3.5 just above it includes curved extension portions a', b' and c' of three of those lines a, b and c, respectively. This larger coherent image 116 is thus visible in its segmented form in FIG. 1 which compares to the corresponding image in its full, continuous state in FIG. 2.

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A closer view of a typical standoff member 108 is shown in FIG. 3. Here the length adjustable member 118 is also shown and is seen to be attached to the elongated member segment 104. The standoff member 108 is attached to the building surface 102 (FIG. 1) using the fasteners and installation methodology appropriate to the building surface 102 at hand, as can be ascertained by one skilled in the art. By way of illustrative example, the standoff member 108 of FIG. 3 is shown in exploded view in FIG. 4, where the standoff member shank 120 is seen to thread into the standoff member mount plate 122 which is secured to the building surface 102 with the building surface mounting fasteners 124. Drywall toggle fasteners (not shown) that are widely available may, for example, thread onto the other end of these fasteners 124 where they extend through holes in an exemplary wall. The standoff member mount plate cover 126 hides the building surface mounting fasteners 124 screw heads.

An opposing standoff member 108 that receives the other end of the elongated member segment is shown in FIG. 5. This is seen to be equivalent to the standoff member 108 shown in FIG. 3, but without the length adjustment member 118. These standoffs 108 are representative of any mechanical element capable of suspending elongated member segments from a wall, and can accordingly be rods, threaded fasteners, eyelets, wooden blocks, etc. A great many commercially available special purpose standoffs can be found on the market that are suitable for direct application here.

FIG. 6 shows a close-up of several display panels 110, adjacent elongated member segments 104, and the clamps 112 that directly couple the segments and panels to each other. A back side view of this region is shown in FIG. 7 where the elongated member segments 104 can be seen running adjacent to (and behind) display panels 110.

Construction of the embodiment of the segmented display array shown in FIG. 1 is achieved by measuring and marking the building surface 102 with locations for mounting of the standoff members 108, and then mounting the standoff members 108 to the building surface 102. Next the length adjustment members 118 are attached to the standoff members 108 (FIG. 3). It is noted that standoff members 108 with integrated length adjustment members 118 are widely available. With these components in place, each elongated member segment 104 is routed between its corresponding length adjustment member 118 and the opposing standoff member 108, and the length adjustment member is used to make the elongated member segment 104 taut. For example, elongated member segment 104.1 is routed between length adjustment member 118.1 (attached to standoff member 108.01) and the opposing standoff member 108.11, and the length adjustment member 118.1 is used to make the elongated member segment 104.1 taut. Display panels 110, by way of non-limiting example, are cardstock prints produced from a larger coherent image 116 that was tiled in, for example, a digital image editing program such as Adobe Photoshop. The display panels 110 are positioned by measurement and manual alignment with the grid established by the elongated member segments 104. Once in position, a given display panel is held in place by one hand of the installer, and the other hand applies clamps 112 in the manner depicted in FIGS. 6 and 7. For ease of assembly, the display panels 110 can include markings (not shown) on their rear faces of their matrix positions to allow ready positioning of the panels in proper order.

It is noted that this exemplary segmented display array achieves a unique and aesthetically pleasing effect with very simple hardware and makes for an adaptive and economical platform for which display panel content 110 can be readily changed out without tools, and collages, for example, can be

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created. It is noted that the same hardware can be used to present display panels **110** of varying sizes; these panels **110** simply need to be sufficiently adjacent to elongated member segments **104** to allow clamping.

Embodiment Including Compression Members

In accordance with another embodiment of the segmented display array, FIG. **8** shows a segmented display array in which elongated member segments **104** that are flexible are vertically suspended off a building surface **102** with standoff members **108**. Here the display panels **110** are understood to be flexible, as depicted by **110'**. Such exemplary display panel material includes fabric, paper, and thin plastic. In order to apply tension to such a flexible display panel **110**, thin and light compression members **128** are inserted between the flexible elongated member segments **104**. One such compression member **128** is shown in FIG. **8** in the region where **110'** is depicted as raised. Each end of the compression member **128** is preferably concavely shaped to more stably engage the elongated member segments **104** when they have a round cross section, such as with cable. Four other compression members **128** are shown underneath the two display panels **110"** (depicted as transparent for clarity). The compression members **128** are thin, lightweight members capable of supporting light compressive loads (balsa wood of rectangular cross section, for example, has been found to work well); they are positioned where a flexible display panel **110** is to be installed (flexible elongated member segment **104** laterally-induced force keeps them in position) and then the flexible display panel **110** is secured via clamps **112** at the adjacent flexible elongated member segments **104** in such a way that the flexible display panel **110** is loaded in tension (i.e. is taut), and the compression members **128** are loaded compressively. FIG. **9** shows the back side of several of the display panels **110** of FIG. **8**, and the associated compression members **128**. Here two compression members **128** are used for each display panel **110**, but one centered compression member **128** has also been found to work well.

In the absence of these compression members **128**, the flexible elongated member segments **104** would simply laterally deflect with respect to one another when an installer attempts to load a flexible display panel **110** in tension (i.e. make it taut). While this is permissible if just one flexible display panel **110** is associated with a pair of flexible elongated member segments **104**, if there are multiple such flexible panels, the loading of one might effectively unload an adjacent one. This effect is reduced by the local compressive load transfer afforded by the described compression members **128**.

Embodiments Including Serpentine Elongated Members

Another embodiment of the segmented display array **100** is shown in FIG. **10**. Here a plurality of elongated member segments **104** are established by a single elongated member **105** being routed in a serpentine fashion from an originating length adjustable member **118*** (connected to originating standoff member **108***) to a standoff member at the terminating end **108****, thereby establishing the shown irregular segmented display array **100** embodiment. The non-originating/non-terminating standoff members **108** in this embodiment (five total) are shown in closer detail in FIG. **11** and can be seen to allow the elongated member **105** to simply pass through. This part is shown in isolated perspective view in FIG. **12**.

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FIG. **13** shows a front view of the present segmented display array **100** embodiment where, for clarity, no clamps **112** are included. The length adjustment member **118*** is manipulated to create tension in the whole elongated member **105**. A variation of this embodiment is shown in FIG. **14** where the triangular and trapezoidal display panels **110** of the previous figures are shown with the same shape but with cut outs, illustrating another type of display panel **110** visual effect that can be achieved with this and other embodiments of the segmented display array **100**.

By way of continued illustration, FIG. **15** presents the use of a single elongated member **105** that is routed along multiple standoff members **108** to allow the mounting of the shown wave-like display panels **110**. Here again clamps **112** are not shown for clarity, yet they would preferably be positioned analogous to those shown on FIG. **10**. FIG. **16** shows a further exemplary segmented display array **100** where the single elongated member **105** is woven between multiple standoff members **108** in a self-intersecting fashion allowing mounting of the shown display panels **110**. Finally, FIG. **17** illustrates the serpentine routing of a single elongated member **105** where this routing takes place between two elongated member segments **104**. These elongated member segments **104** are held in tension between the standoff members **108** shown. Such an embodiment allows for relatively few standoff members yet establishes an appreciable area for display panel **110** mounting.

Display Panels

It is noted that, in the illustrative embodiments presented thus far, the display panels **110** are typically shown in the figures as blank, generally two-dimensional parts. They are, however, understood to represent a great many possibilities. By way of non-limiting example, the display panels **110** can be: prints on paper, mounted prints, graphics, signage, ads, fabric, translucent plastic, relief cut material, lit material, painted images, acoustic material, metal, wood, glass, acrylic, stretched canvas pictures, artwork of all types, shadow boxes, whiteboards, flat screen displays, video panels, and three-dimensional art. The display panels **110** can further be overlapping and amorphous in form. They need not be stiff but can be textile-based; fabric can be woven about multiple elongated member segments, for example. Any combination of these exemplary elements can be used simultaneously; for example, during the holiday season, ribbons can be interlaced with the elongated members, holly suspended from certain areas, and strings of lights routed to illuminate the installation.

Embodiment Including Magnetic Clamps

In accordance with another embodiment, a segmented display array **100** is presented in FIG. **18** in which display panels **110** have permanent magnets **202** affixed to them which in turn are releasably coupled to elongated member segments containing ferromagnetic material **204**. The permanent magnets **202** are only visible from the back, as seen in FIG. **19**, and, in closer view, in FIG. **20**. In this illustrative embodiment the permanent magnets **202** are sections of commercially available magnetic tape or strip which is cut to length from a roll. One side of this magnetic strip has a removable backing, below which is an adhesive that allows coupling between the permanent magnet **202** and display panel **110**. Other magnetic arrangements known to those skilled in the art would also work. In the present embodiment, cable constructed of steel wire is selected as the elongated member segments containing ferromagnetic material **204**. The present embodiment is noted to be very simple, reliable, inexpensive, and to

have no mounting hardware visible from the front. It is also clear that changing out the display panels **110** is extremely easy.

For a given elongated member segment containing ferromagnetic material **204** and a permanent magnet **202** of a certain length, a fixed attractive force will prevail. A simple and effective way to increase the strength of this connection is to route two elongated member segments containing ferromagnetic material **204** side by side. When the permanent magnet **202** is attached to the pair, the increased contact area will enhance the strength and stability of the connection.

The use of permanent magnets **202** to releasably couple display panels **110** to elongated members **104** can take on additional forms. For example, referring to FIG. **20** for visualization purposes, if the display panels **110** were actually thin steel plates (for example, if steel was being used as an art mounting or if polished steel were serving as the display panel itself), permanent magnets **202** could be used to clamp the elongated member segments **104** to the display panels **110**. In the event that the display panels **110** did not inherently contain ferromagnetic material, thin steel strips could be adhered to the display panels **110** and the previous idea used.

As a final note, for purposes of this disclosure and the appended claims, magnetic attachment is included when reference is made to clamping or clamps.

Embodiment Including Panel-Bonded Clamps

In accordance with another embodiment of the segmented display array **100**, FIG. **21** shows a back perspective view. The front side of this embodiment is the same in appearance as that shown in FIG. **18** since no clamping means can be seen from the front, yet, as shown in FIG. **21**, an alternate attachment means is used. Here each finger-releasable clamp **302** is securely bonded to display panel **110** and then releasably clamped to its associated elongated member segment **104** as shown in greater detail in FIG. **22**. Many different clamps known in the art can be selected for the bonded clamp **302**; a preferred bonded clamp **302**, akin to an alligator clip, is shown in FIGS. **21-23**. It has the following desirable characteristics: there are two elastically coupled halves with the bottom half having a planar region favorable for secure bonding to display panel **110**; a finger-accessible region that facilitates ready opening of the bonded clamp **302** by hand; a generally planar clamping area **304** that is extended along the longitudinal axis of the bonded clamp **302** that serves as a stable grip region, anywhere along which an elongated member segment **104** can be securely gripped. The planar clamping area **304** affords side-to-side adjustability of the display panel **110** (i.e. the display panel **110** can be positionally adjusted transverse to elongated member segment) as indicated by the arrow **306** in FIG. **23**. This adjustability makes for more robust system installation success, allowing for standoff member **108** installation inaccuracies that result in elongated member segments **104** being in slightly off-nominal positions. For simplicity the generally planar clamping area **304** in FIGS. **22** and **23** is depicted as smooth, but there are preferably small opposing teeth or otherwise more aggressive mating surfaces to ensure secure elongated member segment **104** gripping.

Referring again to FIG. **21**, we consider the installation steps of this exemplary segmented display array **100**. First, the standoff members **108** are attached to the building surface **102** (which is indicated by dashed lines since this view looks through this surface) followed by elongated member segment **104** attachment and tensioning via length adjustment members **118**. A given display panel **110'**, with bonded clamps

302.1-302.4 already attached, is installed as follows: the installer (who, it is appreciated, is on the opposite, non-visible side of the display panels **110** in FIG. **21**), has a hand on the top and bottom of display panel **110'** and opens bonded clamps **302.1** and **302.2**. The installer then angles display panel **110'** into the building surface, leading with the edge associated with the open bonded clamps **302.1** and **302.2**. Once these clamps are adjacent to elongated member segment **104.1**, they are allowed to close around this member and bonded clamps **302.3** and **302.4** are then opened. The display panel **110'** is rotated about elongated member segment **104.1** to bring the open clamps into the vicinity of their corresponding elongated member segment **104.2** and then they are allowed to close, gripping this member. In some configurations, the active side of the bonded clamp **302** (i.e. that side not attached to display panel **110**) will not clear the elongated member segment as described here. With such geometry, a flexible elongated member segment **104** is used, so that it can be laterally displaced to facilitate clamp clearance and then it is released to spring into the clamping area **304** of the bonded clamps **302**.

Embodiment Including Reversible Panels

In accordance with another embodiment of the segmented display array **100**, FIG. **24** shows reversible display panels **111** releasably coupled to elongated member segments **104**. FIG. **24** is a front view of this segmented display array **100** embodiment, and therefore shows the front faces of the associated reversible display panels **111**, whereas FIG. **25** is a back side view of the same embodiment and therefore shows the rear faces of the associated reversible display panels **111**. In the latter figure it is noted that the view is looking through the building surface **102**. Returning to FIG. **24**, it is clear that various reversible display panels **111** have images different than other of the reversible display panels **111**, but together they form part of a first larger coherent image **116**, which was previously shown in FIG. **2**. For example, the pattern of art lines depicted on reversible display panel **111.1.3** is clearly different than that on adjacent reversible display panel **111.2.3**, and this pattern is continuous across them. The larger coherent image **116** corresponding to the front side of this segmented display array **100** is therefore visible in segmented form in FIG. **24** and in its full, continuous state in FIG. **2**.

When the back side of the segmented display array **100** is considered, as shown in FIG. **25**, the rear faces of the same two reversible display panels **111.1.3** and **111.2.3** are seen to have different images than their front faces (FIG. **24**) and to again be different than each other, yet to be part of a second larger coherent image as suggested by the continuity of art pattern across them. This larger coherent image **116** corresponding to the back side of this segmented display array **100** is therefore visible in its segmented form in FIG. **25** and in its full, continuous state in FIG. **26**. Hence an embodiment of a segmented display array with reversible panels is illustrated.

Embodiment of Multi-Level Display Array

Another embodiment of the segmented display array **100** is presented in front view in FIG. **27**. Here the display array **100** is actually composed of two displays, where the first is offset from the building surface **102** a greater distance than the second. For the first display, which can be seen in full, the first suspended elongated member segments **404** are routed to substantially lie within the first plane **406**. Now, second suspended elongated member segments **454** are routed to substantially lie within a second plane **456** separate from the first

plane **406** and closer to the building surface. There are first display panels **410** releasably attached to first suspended elongated member segments **404**, and second display panels **460** releasably attached to the second suspended elongated member segments **454** via releasable attachment means such as the type shown in FIG. **23** (which is not visible in the view presented in FIG. **27**). It is noted that the first display panels **410** are correlated such that, though having differing images, they together form a single coherent image. Also, although the both first and second displays present multiple display panels in this embodiment, it is noted that, in the limiting case, the second display could have just one display panel **460**. Further, light sources could be coupled to the panel(s) of the second display to enhance the overall visual effect.

Embodiments Including Flexible Standoffs

In accordance with another embodiment of the segmented display array **100**, FIG. **28** shows a segmented display array **100** embodiment that uses flexible standoff members **500**. Here a front perspective view is presented and FIG. **29** shows a back side perspective view (where building surface **102** is effectively transparent). In this latter view, the attachment means associated with the display panels **110** and elongated member segments **104** is seen to be bonded clips **302**. Referring back to FIG. **28**, upper and lower flexible standoff members **500** are identical in form and opposite in orientation, each secured at their near ends to the building surface **102** and bending outwards from the building surface **102** at their far ends due to elongated member segment **104** load application. By way of specific illustration, upper flexible standoff member **500*** is coupled to lower flexible standoff member **500**** via elongated member segment **104***. The preferred elongated member segment **104** is cable in the present embodiment, however other flexible members can be chosen such as wire, rope, thread, string, cord and monofilament.

It is clear from the preceding discussion that the flexible standoff members **500** of the current embodiment act as cantilever beams as can be further appreciated from FIGS. **30a** and **30b**. FIG. **30a** shows a flexible standoff member **500** in its deformed (solid lines) and undeformed (dashed lines) states. Thus, prior to load application, this member is a simple straight bar or beam with a hole **520** to accept routing of the associated elongated member segment **104**, and two holes in the other end to accept the building surface mounting fasteners **124**. There may optionally also be a small notch centered at the top edge at spot **530** on flexible standoff member **500** in FIG. **30a** to serve as a centering guide or reference for the elongated member segment **104**. The flexible standoff member **500** may further have rounded corners (not shown).

The side view of flexible standoff member **500** in FIG. **31** shows this member in its state of bending and establishes the elongated member segment standoff distance **550**. Clearly load application to the elongated member segment **104** results in elastic energy storage in the flexible standoff member **500** and a change (increase) in the standoff distance **550**. A front view of the flexible standoff member is shown in FIG. **32** and an exploded view in FIG. **33**. The latter view makes the elongated member segment **104** routing clear, where one end of this flexible member is noted to have a fixed terminal **506** that prevents it from slipping through hole **520** in flexible standoff member **500**. The other end of the cable goes through the same hole in the opposing flexible standoff member **500** and it is secured in place by a one way removable terminal **507**, as shown in FIG. **30b**.

It has been found that $\frac{3}{64}$ " stainless steel cable with #80 terminal ball end manufactured by Griplock Systems, LLC of

Carpentaria, Calif. works well for the elongated member segment **104** (Part Number: AS-12-80-72). Aluminum, of the type 5052 and thickness of 0.08 inches, has been found an effective material for the flexible standoff members, having a length on the order of 10 inches and a width of 1 inch (these parameters are dependent on the specifics of a given installation). Further, a $\frac{1}{16}$ " hole **520** has been noted to work well in both flexible standoff members for a given pair, where a one way removable terminal **507** from Griplock Systems with Part Number: DG-12-NT-RR-SAT serves ideally. Certainly the flexible standoff member could be made out of steel, plastic, composites, and a host of other materials. The other specifics of this example could also be substantially altered for a given system, and are therefore disclosed here purely for purposes of illustration. It is parenthetically noted that, for this specific system, neither the removable terminal **507** nor the fixed terminal **506** are actually needed. The size of the hole **520** and the sharp angle through which the cable **104** must go to thread through this hole **520** causes the cable **104** to lock in the hole; the harder the cable is pulled, the more securely the cable **104** seats in place. (This is analogous to being able to easily pass a length of cable through a close-fitting hole by pulling on the cable parallel to the hole's axial direction, but not being able to pull the cable through by pulling perpendicularly to this first direction, but rather causing binding instead.)

Referring to FIGS. **28** and **30**, we review the construction sequence for the present embodiment. Flexible standoff members **500*** (upper) and **500**** (opposing lower) are first secured to building surface **102** with mounting fasteners **124** in the positions and orientations shown in FIG. **28**. Next a small object is placed under the free end of each **500*** and **500**** to hold them in a deformed position away from the wall (akin to their final position as shown in the figure). This is done in such a manner that holes **520** are still accessible, allowing the threading through of elongated member segment **104*** first through the hole **520** in upper flexible standoff member **500***, looping around **500*** top-most portion (see FIG. **30a**), and then being routed downward to **500****. At **500****, the flexible member **104*** is looped around the lower-most portion of **500**** (see FIG. **30b**) then threaded through hole **520** in **500**** and retained by one-way removable terminal **507**. Then the elongated member segment **104*** is pulled taut with the flexible standoff members still in their forced deformed state. The blocks are next removed and any final cable adjustment is made to achieve the final desired standoff distance **550**. This process is repeated across all flexible standoff members **500** of this embodiment followed by the expected subsequent system installation steps.

It is noted that in FIG. **28**, there is enough room for another row of display panels **110** both above and below the display panels **110** presented. Such an addition would make the building surface mounting hardware nearly vanish from many vantage points. This is an inherent advantage of the present embodiment that is illustrated in different form in FIG. **34**. Here the display panels **110** are depicted as transparent with dashed lines indicating their edges. They are releasably attached to elongated member segments **104** via permanent magnet strips **202**. It is evident that the mounting hardware here is also substantially visually obscured by the display panels **110**. Certainly making the flexible standoff members **500** shorter, and placing column pairs closer together would make them even less visible.

Besides offering the advantage of minimally visible display hardware, other strengths of segmented display array embodiments that utilize flexible standoff members **500** include the fact that no length adjustment member **118** (e.g.

FIG. 21) are needed. Further, a continuous range of elongated member segment standoff distances 550 can be achieved. The flexible standoff members 500 as exemplified here can easily and inexpensively be cut from sheet material, such as steel or aluminum, and shipping of such flat members is quite convenient. Flexible standoff members according to the present embodiment can further readily accept paint and/or a host of other surface treatments to best agree with their installation environment. Their flexibility can also be seen as a safety advantage in light of the potential case of a person inadvertently and forcefully pressing the elongated member segments 104 towards a building surface (due, for example, to a collision). Greater system flexibility will result in reduced reaction loads into the person and wall.

A high degree of flexible standoff member 500 customization is possible for the present embodiment to suit the demands of a wide range of segmented display arrays 100. For example, the material and associated thickness for the flexible standoffs 500 can be selected to achieve the best mechanical and aesthetic results. The cut profile that determines the width of the part, and whether this is constant or varying can further be adjusted, as can the length of the flexible region; both of which will substantially influence its stiffness. Further, multiple flexible standoff members of the present embodiment can be stacked on top of each other prior to being loaded to accommodate a wide range of conditions. These variables allow for the upper flexible standoff member 500 to be stiffer than the lower one, if need be. Slotting the holes to receive building surface mounting fasteners 124 (see FIG. 33) is another approach at building adjustability into the flexible standoff members 500. This is relevant when the display panels 110 associated with the standoffs 500 are of significant weight and vertical suspension of the elongated member segment 104 is desired (the upper standoffs 500 will experience more load and therefore may need to be stiffer than the lower).

While the focus of embodiments presented here have been two opposing flexible standoff members 500, there could clearly be just one flexible standoff 500 opposing a conventional standoff 108, such as that presented in FIG. 5.

Flexible standoff members 500 are typically not wholly flexible. In the embodiment presented in FIG. 30a, for example, clearly the small region of this member surrounding the building surface mounting fasteners 124 does not flex. This is seen more substantially in another embodiment shown in FIG. 35 where two adjacent flexible standoff members are integrated into a single part that is still designated a flexible standoff member 500, yet is composed of distinct regions comprising both elastic elements 502 that store elastic energy upon tensioning of associated elongated member segment 104 (thereby changing standoff distance 550), and an inactive element or area 503 that does not deform. The purpose of the inactive portion 503 in the case of the embodiment shown in FIG. 35 is to facilitate wall mounting and to minimize part count and provide for ease and stability of installation.

Certainly other types of flexible standoff member 500 deformation are contemplated besides the bending illustrated thus far. It may be that this part is configured such that compressive load causes elastic element 502 deformation. Or, for example, an elastic element 502 that stores energy torsionally could be used. This is illustrated in FIG. 36 where a torsional spring 508 is notionally represented and the remaining portions of the flexible standoff member 500 are elastically inactive 503.

For those instances where continuous standoff distance variation as a function of elongated member segment 104 load is not desired, but rather a fixed distance is needed, FIG.

37 presents one embodiment of a solution. This flexible standoff member 500 uses a constant-distance member 560 to ensure a standoff distance that is independent of the state of deformation of elastic element 502, which in this case is a beam in bending.

Kit and Template Embodiments

In an embodiment depicted in FIG. 38, a kit for installing a segmented display array 600 is presented. By way of non-limited example this includes, in container 602, elongated member 105 that is here shown uncut but may also come in segments. Four elongated member segments 104 are to be cut from this item. A sufficient number of standoff members 500, are included for suspending the four elongated member segments 104 from a building surface 102. Also included in this container 602 are 8 display panels 110 and 16 permanent magnets 202 to be bonded to the display panels 110 and secured to elongated member segments 104. Also included in this exemplary kit is a template 604 for assisting standoff member 500 positioning on building surface 102. Finally, a spacer 608 is included for final display panel 110 positioning.

The template 604 is shown unrolled in FIG. 39a. The material is preferably paper, but a host of thin materials including plastic would be adequate provided the printed dashed lines adhere to it and it can be easily drilled through to establish mounting holes in the building surface 102. As an alternate, more rapid installation tool, an embodiment of a modified template which has standoff members affixed directly to it 606 is shown in FIG. 39b. The modified template 605 has windows cut out of it, as shown in FIG. 39c, to allow direct contact between the mounting region of each standoff member 500 and the corresponding area on the building surface 102. A temporary bonding agent secures the standoff 500 and template 605 together, such as from a light duty glue or tape. Using the modified template and standoff assembly 606, the standoffs 500 are positioned on and coupled to the building surface 102 in one step. (Template 604, on the other hand, requires drilling, template removal, and then standoff attachment). The more rapid approach associated with template 605 is made possible by using, by way of non-limiting example, such wallboard fasteners as Wall-Dogs (by Powers Fasteners, Inc of Brewster, N.Y.). These are one piece threaded fasteners that can directly mount hardware to drywall. Therefore, once the template/standoff assembly 606 is in the desired position on the building surface 102, fasteners need simply be inserted into standoff receiving holes, secured to building surface 102, and the modified template 605 can then be torn away. This is followed by the normal installation steps of the segmented display array 100.

By way of further illustration, FIG. 40a shows another embodiment of template and standoff assembly 606 that can be used for rapidly installing a different type of standoff member 500. The small cut out windows in the template 605 near the bottom region of the standoffs 500 can be noted. FIG. 40b depicts yet another template/standoff assembly 606 embodiment. This is for creating a less regular elongated member segment 104 routing scheme, as indicated by the dashed line on template 605. Certainly the more conventional standoff member 108 (previously shown in FIG. 4) can be used in the kit; in such a case the template might appear as shown illustratively in FIG. 40c, where the dashed lines represent printed line on the template for building surface 102 hole drilling. FIG. 41 shows an embodiment of the spacer being used to confirm the gap distance between several adjacent display panels 110.

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CLOSING

While embodiments of the invention have been illustrated and described in detail in the drawings and foregoing description, the same is to be considered as illustrative and not restrictive in character, it being understood that only a selection of embodiments have been shown and described and that all equivalents, changes, and modifications that come within the spirit of the invention as described herein and/or by the following claims are desired to be protected.

What is claimed is:

1. A segmented display array suitable for being positioned on a building surface comprising:

- (a) suspended elongated member segments routed to substantially lie within a plane;
- (b) standoff members distinct from but connected to each suspended elongated member segment, and being suitable for mounting on a building surface;
- (c) display panels adjacent said elongated member segments; and
- (d) permanent magnets associated with each of said display panels and adjacent elongated member segments to releasably couple said display panel and said elongated member segments to each other.

2. The display array of claim 1 in which said elongated member segments are selected from the group consisting of cable, wire, rope, thread, string, cord, monofilament, tubing, bars and rods.

3. The display array of claim 2 in which said elongated member segments are flexible and selected from the group consisting of cable, wire, rope, thread, string, cord, and monofilament.

4. The display array of claim 1 in which said suspended elongated member segments contain ferromagnetic material

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and each of said display panels have associated permanent magnets affixed thereto for releasably coupling said display panel to said elongated member segments.

5. The display array of claim 1 in which there is at least one panel where an associated suspended elongated member segment passes from that panel to another panel before reaching a standoff member.

6. The display array of claim 1 in which every panel has an associated suspended elongated member segment that passes from that panel to another panel before reaching a standoff member.

7. The display of claim 1 in which said permanent magnets are situated between the front surface of said display panels and said adjacent elongated member segments.

8. A kit for installing a segmented display array which comprises in a single container, sufficient elongated member to make 4 suspended elongated member segments, a sufficient number of standoff members suitable for suspending said segments away from a building surface, 8 display panels and 16 permanent magnets for securing said display panels to said elongated member.

9. The kit of claim 8 additionally comprising a template for assisting the positioning of said standoff members on a building surface.

10. The kit of claim 9 additionally comprising a spacer for assisting the positioning of the display panels with respect to the elongated member during installation.

11. The kit of claim 9 in which said template has said standoff members affixed directly to it to allow for direct coupling of said standoff members with said building surface once in position.

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